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ABSTRACT

Already a standard technique in anthropology, the life history method is widely used in the development of oral and local history, and within educational and social science research the method is growing in popularity. This is in large part due to the growing respectability of qualitative research in general. Part I of this paper explains the life history method and points out its practical value as well as some of its pitfalls and difficulties. In order to demonstrate its diverse applications, four examples of research using this method are presented. The range of strategies employed in data collection, techniques of data analysis, and the value of this approach is expressed as the researchers' reasons for choosing this investigative method. The theoretical roots of the approach are oriented toward the perspective within social theory known as symbolic interactionism. Part II focuses on actual life history research techniques. Guidelines are provided followed by an actual example of research conducted by the author. An appendix lists some practical notes intended to aid anyone wishing to carry out life history research. Part III contains a 188-item annotated and cross-referenced bibliography, divided by subject, of social and educational research studies that have made use of the life history method. (JB)

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QUALITATIVE STRATEGIES IN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

THE LIFE HISTORY METHOD IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Paul F. Armstrong

1987

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THE LIFE HISTORY METHOD IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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NEWLAND PAPERS

This is the fourteenth paper in a series intended primarily to publish the work of members of staff and research students of the School of Adult and Continuing Education. 'Newland' is the name of the district in the city of Kingston-upon-Hull in which the University is situated.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This paper is a revised and enlarged version of Newland Paper No.7, first published in 1982. The paper has been revised to take account of (i) theoretical developments both within the methodology and the author; (ii) the substantial work that has been carried out since the 1960s using the life history method; (iii) the need to strengthen the emphasis of data analysis using qualitative techniques, the literature related to that, and to give guidance to those looking to undertake this kind of research. Accordingly, the paper now consists of three parts. Part I is essentially an updated version of the original document. Part II consists of a reflexive account of a worked example carried out by the author. Part III is an annotated and cross-referenced bibliography of social and educational research that has made use of, in various ways, the life history method.

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PART I THE METHOD

Chapter One INTRODUCTION

Five years after the first edition of this paper, the life history method is gradually gaining ground as a respectable strategy for social and educational research. Already a standard technique in anthropology, the life history method has become a convention in the development of 'oral' and local history[1], and within educational and social science research the method is gradually becoming more widely used. This is in large part due to the growing respectability of qualitative research in general. Since 1982, when this paper was first published, a large and growing number of textbooks on qualitative research have appeared[2]. In one way this is curious since the general climate in which this increase in interest in 'soft' research has taken place has been one of technicism and efficiency, where the demand for 'hard' statistical data on performance, inputs, outputs, and the measurement of variables, especially for evaluation, has been the norm. Behind this, however, has been the growing realisation that such data are not unproblematic, and do not in themselves answer questions. Evaluation research is an interesting case in point. As I have noted elsewhere[3], people, projects and programmes are increasingly called into account for their behaviour, their performance, and their efficiency. In an effort to make objective appraisals, and to invent ways of measuring what turn out to be subjective and intangible variables, such as human happiness, there has been a growing interest in qualitative evaluation techniques[4].

As a core strategy in qualitative research, the life history method has become a much more tried and tested method of research, and has increasing recognition in standard methodology texts. This renewed enthusiasm follows a long period during which the method fell into disuse after it was given its initial impetus by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s[5].

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[1] This paper has specifically chosen to avoid the growing area of the use of the life history method in historical research. Its use in social history is, however, fully discussed by Paul Thompson in *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), and its value for local history is discussed by Raphael Samuel in 'Local history and oral history' *History Workshop Journal*, no.1, 1976; pp. 191-208; reprinted in Robert G. Burgess (ed), *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982); pp. 136-145

[2] For example, Paul Atkinson and Martin Hammersley, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Tavistock, 1983); Joan Bliss, Martin Monk and Jon Ogburn, *Qualitative Data Analysis for Educational Research* (London: Croom Helm, 1983); Robert C. Bogdan and Sari K. Biklen, *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982); Robert G. Burgess (ed), 1982, op.cit; Robert G. Burgess (ed), *Strategies of Educational Research: Qualitative Methods* (Lewes: Falmer Press, 1985); Robert G. Burgess (ed), *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methodology* (Lewes: Falmer Press, 1985); Janet Finch, *Qualitative Methodology and Social Policy: Issues in Education and the Social Sciences* (Lewes: Falmer Press, 1985); J. Kirk and M.L.Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 1986); J.Powey and M.Watts, *Interviewing in Educational Research* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); David Silverman, *Qualitative Methodology and Sociology: Describing the Social World* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985); Anselm Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987);and R.Walker (ed), *Applied Qualitative Research* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985)

[3] Paul F. Armstrong, 'Called to Account: Evaluation, Accountability and Objectivity', in M.Zukas (ed), *Papers from the 16th Annual Conference of the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA)*, 1986; pp. 134-142

[4] Within education, in curriculum evaluation this is represented in the idea of 'illuminative evaluation'; see, for example, Malcolm Parlett and David Hamilton, *Evaluation as Illumination: A New Approach to the Study of Innovatory Programmes* (Edinburgh: Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh, 1972); reprinted in David Hamilton et. al. (eds), *Beyond the Number Game* (London: Macmillan Education, 1977); pp. 6-22

This previous reluctance to make use of the method in social and educational research is fully understandable since the method has a number of practical and methodological difficulties, which this paper will seek to outline and discuss. It will be suggested that some of these problems have been overstated, and that the life history method is not necessarily 'methodologically unsound', nor 'practically inefficient'. By unduly worrying about these difficulties, social science has neglected a valuable research tool, which is now being remedied. In this paper, an emphasis will be placed on the *value* of the life history method, and I will try to demonstrate both the problems and the advantages of the method, as well as signify the diversity of its application, both by looking in detail at some extracts from studies which have, in a variety of settings and ways, employed the life history method, often obtaining data which would have been difficult to collect through any other research technique, and by providing an annotated bibliography of its use in a wide range of social and educational research studies.

Moreover, as will be argued, and this is especially relevant to adult education, as there has been a marked interest in the notion of 'praxis' - the unity of theory and practice - it will be shown that the life history method has much promise here to offer those who wish to engage in research as *praxis*.

One of the common deterrents to using the life history approach is that it does not produce the kind of datum that is commonly expected and accepted in social and educational research. And it is not only the datum *per se*, but the way in which it is organised and presented in the writing up of the research. As Howard Becker has noted:

> The customs, traditions, and organisational practices of contemporary sociology conspire to make us take this view of research. The journal article of standard length, the most common means of scientific communication, is made to order for the presentation of findings that confirm or refute hypotheses. The Ph.D thesis virtually demands that its author have a set of findings, warranted by his own operations, which yield conclusions he can defend before a faculty committee. The research grant proposal, another ubiquitous sociological literary form, pushes its author to state what his project will have proved when the money has been spent.[6]

There are two implications to be drawn out here. Firstly, instead of presenting series of statistical tables and analyses, the style of the life history approach is to provide often rather lengthy extracts which may be largely descriptive. This is not to say that the life history approach cannot be subjected to statistical analysis. As we shall see, one of the detailed extracts we examine does reduce the life history data to statistical categories, and in the annotated bibliography in **Part III**, a number of studies summarised do use the data in this way. For example, Yvonne Gold's study of 'burnout' experienced by American school teachers, changes the life history data into measurable variables to correlate with scores on a 'burnout' test (*see under* **Education**), as did Lenore Tate in looking at life satisfaction which she wanted to correlate, using multiple regression, with measures of death anxiety (*see under* **Psychology**). But generally, the format of life history studies has an appearance not dissimilar to this paper. A quick glance through will reveal that a great many quotes and extracts are used - some quite long - taken from other sources. No apology is made for this. It is in this sense that this paper - like Bogdan's autobiography of Jane Fry (*see* **Chapter 4**) - has been compiled rather than written by the author.

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[5] In his re-examination of Blumer's critique of *The Polish Peasant*, Evan Thomas says the use of life histories by the Chicago School was already in decline by 1938; see Evan Thomas, 'Herbert Blumer's critique of *The Polish Peasant*: A post-mortem on the life history approach in sociology' *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 14, 1978; pp. 124-131. For a discussion on the work of the Chicago School, see Robert E.L.Faris, *Chicago Sociology, 1920-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Lee Harvey, *Myths of the Chicago School of Sociology* (Aldershot: Avebury Press, 1987); and D.Smith, *The Chicago School* (London: Macmillan, 1987)

[6] Howard Becker, 'Introduction' to Clifford R. Shaw, *The Jack Roller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); p.vii

It is hoped that the style of this paper will adequately reflect that most often used in those studies based on life history data. As will be stressed, one of the strengths of this approach is that it tends to produce more readable and therefore more accessible studies, particularly if the method succeeds in capturing

> the full flavour of the speech of the people, the slang, the nuances, the hesitations, the laughter and the tears. Autobiographies based on tape transcriptions present living documents of a type that are difficult to match by any other method.[7]

Secondly, the method has sound theoretical underpinnings, and these will be discussed briefly in **Chapter 5** in order to demonstrate that scepticism about the method on the grounds that it has no wider link to theoretical understanding, and has little power of generalisability is unfounded. The theoretical orientation within which the method was originally developed is that known in sociology as 'symbolic interactionism', a theory which highlights the symbolic, processual and interactive nature of reality and its social construction, which is grounded in pragmatism. This makes it particularly suitable given that

> The life history technique is grounded in a pragmatist approach to knowledge in which the ultimate test of truth is experience. The life history technique and its ally, symbolic interactionism, are not so much concerned with grasping the totality either of structures or personality as they are concerned with depicting the immediate lived experience as actual members in everyday society grasp them. These experiences shift and change from context to context, and the criteria of truth here is the grasping objectively of these lived experiences. Hence one may be objective in one's portrait of any world view, but this is not to say that this world view makes any claim to being any kind of universal truth.[8]

This is not to suggest that the life history method is the monopoly of symbolic interactionism. The studies in Bertaux's edited collection

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[7] Oscar Lewis, *La Vida* (London: Panther Modern Society, 1968); p.25

[8] Annabel Faraday and Ken Plummer, 'Doing life histories' *Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 4, 1979; p. 779

> make use of very diverse theoretical frameworks: symbolic interactionism of course, but also Sartrian Marxism, structuralist Marxism, cultural anthropology, historical social psychology, psycho-history, role theory, interpretive sociology - to name a few.[9]

Indeed, as Bertaux says in a footnote, most European work is done outside the symbolic interactionist tradition. At a time when Marxist theory is still struggling to develop its own unique methodology, the life history offers many possibilities of becoming a core research practice which can adequately reflect its theoretical underpinnings. Ironically, this 'alternative' methodology has emerged quite strongly in feminist theory and research, where it has been developed as a contribution towards a non-sexist methodology. It can achieve this through an emphasis on its participatory nature, which can make the life history a form of 'consciousness-raising', and at the same time assist in breaking down the traditional authoritarian research relationships which characterise most other research strategies and reflect the nature of the patriarchal and capitalist society in which they take place.[10]

In this paper, therefore, I intend to show that there is some profit in employing the life history approach, yet pointing out some of its pitfalls and difficulties. In doing so, I also hope to convey something of its past history, as well as its theoretical roots and subsequent development, and to try to show its practical value in doing social and educational research. In short, I shall seek to convince the reader that the life history,

> when properly conceived and employed, can become one of the sociologists' most powerful observational and analytical tools.[11]

Moreover, it is a method which can be employed with very little awareness of sociological analysis, the theoretical underpinnings of the method (in this sense, **Chapter 5** is optional reading, and not crucial to making use of the method), or little experience of social research. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it can be argued that there is a good deal of mystification concerning the carrying out of research, and this paper begins from the assumption that every human being, in living out their daily lives, engages in research practices in order to facilitate the smooth operation of their lives. To support those who wish to develop the confidence to undertake life history research, this paper also seeks to serve as a handbook for the practice of life history data collection and analysis.

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[9] Daniel Bertaux (ed), *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences* (London: Sage, 1981); p.6

[10] Two general methodology texts from the feminist point of view are Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); and Helen Roberts (ed), *Doing Feminist Research* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); see also Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (eds), *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Prospects* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); and Sue Scott, 'Feminist research and qualitative methods' in Robert G. Burgess (ed), 1985; pp. 67-85

[11] Norman Denzin, 'Introduction to Part X: The Life History Method' in Norman K. Denzin (ed), *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook* (London: Butterworths, 1970); p.415

Chapter Two THE VALUE OF THE LIFE HISTORY METHOD

The contribution of the life history method to social and educational research is multi-faceted. Firstly, it is a method which can be used for *exploratory* purposes. Indeed, this is probably seen as its one and only advantage, as a 'pilot study' in which the researcher is sensitised to the particular phenomenon under study, and through which the main issues are conceptualised, so that a larger and more comprehensive research strategy may be planned, perhaps using some kind of statistical, positivist, hypothetico-deductive model to test those hypotheses which may have emerged using the preliminary life history method. An example of this is Bossard's study (*see* **Chapter 4**). This is often seen to be the main advantage of doing other kinds of qualitative research as well, particularly participant observation. Although I would not wish to negate this particular value, I shall try to establish that the life history method has much more to offer beyond this.

A compromise position might be to argue a second advantage of using life histories, and this is its *complementary* contribution to social research. That is, the method might be used to complement other research techniques used. In the annotated bibliography in **Part III**, there are a number of studies of this nature. For example, Mary Anne Pitman's study of women re-entering continuing education draws on life history data alongside that derived from observation, documentary analysis, and survey research (*see under* **Adult Education**). Similarly, in Lalive-d'Epinay's study of depressed elderly women in Switzerland, life histories were used to supplement survey data (*see under* **Ageing, Elderly and Life-Span Development**). In an extract from my own work, I show how I used life histories to supplement or complement data gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and the use of documentary materials. Taken together, I refer to these research techniques as the *biographical* approach to social and educational research (*see* **Chapter 4**).

Of course, this complementary role need not merely be carried out within one single study. The classic use of the life history method is to be found in Clifford Shaw's *The Jack Roller*, first published in 1930, which is the biography of Stanley, a juvenile delinquent in Chicago. In the introduction to a more recent edition, Becker has written:

> If we are concerned about the representativeness of Stanley's case, we have only to turn to the ecological studies carried on by Shaw and McKay to see the same story told on a grand scale in mass statistics. And, similarly, if one wanted to understand the maps and correlations contained in ecological studies of delinquency, one could then turn to *The Jack Roller* and similar documents for that understanding.[1]

Even if we were to take these two facets alone, there should be sufficient justification for including a section on life histories in any methodology textbook, or a session in any research methods course. However, the value of the life history method goes beyond this. For example, it can be argued that the technique tends to focus on specific forms of social or educational life which might otherwise be neglected. That is, life histories are particularly useful for the exploration of the subjective reality of individuals. As Shaw said,

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[1] Howard Becker, 'Introduction' to Clifford R. Shaw, *The Jack Roller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); pp. vi-vii

> The boy's 'own story' is of primary importance as a device for ascertaining the personal attitudes, feelings and interest of the child; in other words, it shows how he conceives his role in relation to other persons and the interpretations which he makes of the situations in which he lives. It is in the personal document that the child reveals his feelings of inferiority and superiority, his fears and worries, his ideals and philosophy of life, his antagonisms and mental conflicts.[2]

In other words, as Burgess had previously indicated:

> In the life history is revealed, as in no other way, the inner life of the person, his moral struggles, his successes and failures in securing control of his destiny in a world too often at variance with his hopes and ideals.[3]

Thus, the life history method assigns significance and value to the person's 'own story', or to interpretations that people place on their own experiences as an explanation for their own behaviour:

> To understand why someone behaves as he does, you must understand how it looked to him, what he thought he had to contend with, what alternatives he saw open to him; you can only understand the effects of opportunity structures, delinquent subcultures, social norms and other commonly invoked explanations of behaviour by seeing them from the actor's point of view.[4]

From the 1960s, this *verstehen* perspective has been revived, particularly within the sociology of deviancy[5]. But more than 'telling-it-like-it-is', the life history is documenting the inner, subjective reality as constructed by the individuals themselves, showing how they interpret, understand and define the social world around them, but at the same time, the life history method is able to convey a sense of *process*. Again, Becker sums this up well:

> The life history, more than any other technique except perhaps participant observation, can give meaning to the overworked notion of process. Sociologists like to speak of ongoing processes and the like, but their methods usually prevent them from seeing the processes they talk about so glibly.[6]

Within sociology, life history is sometimes seen to be synonymous with another processual concept - that of 'career'. Shaw begins *The Jack Roller* by saying that the subject matter of the book is 'limited' to the case study of the career of a young male delinquent'[7]. The idea of 'career' was originally used in the study of professions and occupations, but recently has enjoyed a renewed currency, again particularly in the sociology of deviancy. In the 1960s and 1970s, there appeared a number of 'career' studies of various but mainly deviant life-styles: mental patients[8], 'dope fiends'[9], nudists[10], delinquents[11], and homosexuals[12]. One problem with this notion of 'career' is that, although it does suggest process, it is often constructed in terms of a hypothetical career model, which presents the ideal-typical stages through which an individual would pass in the process of, say, becoming deviant[13]. This model tends to say this is how things should be, and so it ends up being rather more deterministic than perhaps it tends to be, as one writer is aware:

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[2] Clifford R. Shaw, ibid; pp. 3-4

[3] Ernest W. Burgess, 'The family and the person' in *Personality and the Social Group* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); p.133

[4] Howard Becker, op.cit; pp. vi-vii

[5] See, for example, Mark Lefton, John K. Skipper and Charles G. McCaghy, *Approaches to Deviance* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968); Charles G. McCaghy, John K. Skipper and Mark Lefton (eds), *In Their Own Behalf: Voices from the Margin* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968); David M. Petersen and Martin Truzzi (eds), *Criminal Life: Views from the Inside* (Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972); and Jerry Jacobs (ed), *Deviance: Field Studies and Self Disclosures* (Palo Alto, California: National Press Books, 1974)

[6] Howard Becker, op.cit; p. xiii

> Such a concept [career] is not meant to imply that all people in the same course of action are necessarily going to face all these contingencies, alone in the same sequences as described in the typical career trajectory. Nor is it meant to depict features of individuals; rather, it is a heuristic device and not a concrete one.[14]

Nevertheless, career does carry this connotation of a 'fixed and inevitable process'[15]. The problem of career, of course, is that it has been taken from everyday language where it is most often used to imply a kind of vertical or horizontal movement through occupational structures, reflected by the use of such phrases as 'career development', which depicts a career as having an ideal-typical path of upward progression. This connotation of career as a fixed progression is not easily lost, and together with its unilinear nature means that it is rather limited in its utility for the social scientist. However, its value would be increased if it were seen in relation to a person's other careers. A person can have a career in any given sphere of activity that a person goes through on the way to a moreorless definite and recognisable end-point[16]. Given this, what needs to be done is to situate individuals' careers in terms of all their other careers since

> no career can be properly examined without attention to its interaction with other careers.[17]

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[7] Clifford R. Shaw, op.cit; p. 1

[8] See, for example, Erving Goffman, *Asylums* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1968); and Stephen P. Spitzer and Norman K. Denzin (eds), *The Mental Patients: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: MacGraw-Hill, 1968)

[9] Howard Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963); and Dan Waldorf, *Careers in Dope* (Engelwoord Cliffs, New Jersey: Spectrum Books, Prentice-Hall, 1973)

[10] Martin S. Weinberg, 'Becoming a nudist' *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, vol. 29, no.1, 1966; reprinted in Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg (eds), *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective*, 2nd. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1973)

[11] Howard Parker, *View from the Boys: A Sociology of Downtown Adolescents* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1974)

[12] Ken Plummer, *Sexual Stigma* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975)

[13] Earl Rubington and Martin S. Weinberg (eds), op.cit; pp. 227-228

[14] Ken Plummer, op.cit; p. 134

[15] William J. Filstead (ed), *An Introduction to Deviance: Readings in the Process of Making Deviants* (Chicago: Markham Books, 1972); p. 4

[16] Julius A. Roth, *Timetables* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963); p. xviii

[17] Malcolm L. Johnson, 'Medical careers: a biographical approach', Paper delivered to British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, Manchester, April 1976; p. 10

A person's life history or biography can be seen as a network of interrelating careers. But this is still inadequate unless we move to Everitt Hughes's idea of 'life career' as a dynamic perspective in which people see their life as a whole, a totality, and interpret the meaning of various attributes, actions and events which happen to them, and thereby using the concept in a broad sense to incorporate personal circumstances, decisions, incidents and coincidence, which occur within a highly structured situation with a limited number of cultural options available. Like career, biography is sequential: no one point in time can be understood without looking at what went before. But unlike career, biography is idiosyncratic rather than ideal-typical. That is, methodologically, we cannot talk about the typical biography of the deviant, or the college lecturer, or the adult students or whatever. It is, however, possible to generalise to one type by showing that several life histories or biographies are basically similar and that dominant themes can be drawn out. In psychology, on the other hand, life history data may be used to demonstrate the uniquely individual characteristics of events and life chances (*see* B.Bright *under* **Psychology** *in* **Part III**).

This stresses the processual nature of the life history, and also highlights the focus of the method on totality. Most social and educational research succeeds in fragmenting aspects of people's lives by focusing solely on, for example, 'personality', 'attitude' or 'IQ'; or by divorcing a study of structural and cultural reasons for, say, enrolment on adult education courses, from people's life experiences. The life history method attempts to locate individuals in their overall life experience as well as their broader socio-historical backgrounds within which they live. This is particularly significant in the case of so-labelled 'deviants', for it can be clearly demonstrated that people's homosexuality, for example, is but one aspect of their lives, and that as persons they are much more than homosexuals, and that given societal reaction towards such 'deviants', this tells us much more about the society than the individual in any case. In other words. the life history method allows us not only to see individuals in terms of their whole life, from birth to the point in which we encounter them, but it also enables us to see our subjects

> as if they have a past with successes as well as failures, and a future with hopes and fears. It allows us to see an individual in relation to the history of his time, and how he is influenced by the various religious, social, psychological and economic currents present in his world. It permits us to view the intersection of the life history of men with the history of their society, thereby enabling us to understand better the choices, contingencies and options given to the individual.[18]

As C. Wright Mills once said,

> Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.[19]

This stresses the interplay of individuals and their society, of biography and history, and of self and world, and that as every individual lives out their biography, and is living it out within some historical sequence, they are indeed contributing to their society and the course of its history. Wright Mills is arguing that it is 'sociological imagination' which enables us to understand the intersection of individuals' life histories and the history of their society, but in doing so, Wright Mills is stressing the value of the life history as a source of knowledge and understanding of the social world.

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[18] Robert Bogdan (ed), *Being Different: The Autobiography of Jane Fry* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974); p. 4

[19] C.Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1970); p. 3

We can take this further. The relationship between the individual and society has long been a subject of debate within sociology. Deterministic accounts have been left behind, and even within Marxist theory, once derided because it appeared to see human beings as being determined by the economic substructure of society, there is now potential for grasping the dialectical relationship between individuals and their social, political, economic and historical contexts, and this has implications for a Marxist methodology which employs the life history technique, as we shall discuss in **Chapter 5**.

In addition, there are two other contributions which the life history method has to offer. Firstly, by focusing on the case study of one individual, it is possible to provide a *critical* analysis of some ideas that have traditionally been taken for granted or assumed. This does not mean that it is necessary to accept the perspective of the person(s) being studied, but that we should at least be able to suspend our values and beliefs in order to be able to empathise with their world view or *weltanschauung*, and consider alternative views of the world. For example, acts of vandalism are often described as 'meaningless', 'motiveless' or 'senseless'. Yet, if we were to study the life history of a 'vandal', it might well be that what was previously incomprehensible to us becomes meaningful in terms of that person's biography and the particular socio-economic structure in which they exist. Whilst we may not wish to condone such acts, we might at least argue that we ought to, firstly, allow such people to speak for themselves, and the method does give them a 'legitimate' voice to be heard, and secondly, to take account of the societal context in which those acts take place. In an analysis of the life history of a transsexual, Jane Fry, which we shall later use as an example, Bogdan contrasts the perspectives which Jane constructs around the notion of transsexualism with those of the professional 'experts', such as psychiatrists, social workers and social scientists:

> Jane accepts her gender feelings for what they are, that is, she takes them for granted. The professionals, however, see them as immature verbalisations, a character disorder, a castration anxiety, a psychotic profile, and part of a repertoire for the resolution of core conflict.[20]

What we have here is an alternative explanation or definition of reality, which has to be taken seriously even though it might challenge some traditional and orthodox ways of thinking about the world, and any method which encourages critical reflexiveness must be of value. Elsewhere, I have argued that where such definitions are treated as traditional or even 'commonsense' as in the case of the notion of 'need', then we encounter a situation of power, where one group in society, whether the class who rule directly or the mediating groups such as professionals, are able to impose their values, beliefs and norms upon the rest of society[21]. The life history method is an ideal vehicle for exposing such 'hidden' controls over human actions.

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[20] Robert Bogdan (ed), op.cit; p. 215

Secondly, on a practical level, the life history method is a valuable technique of teaching students about research methods. Whilst a taught course, even at postgraduate level, does not generally permit survey work to be carried out very thoroughly, the life history method is convenient for student projects and dissertations. One such project will be described in **Part II** of this paper. The method can be utilised at a number of levels, from oral history in the school classroom[22] to adult or community education courses. The technique has been used for community needs assessment[23] and other kinds of community studies. Indeed, the collection of 'life stories' is one of four approaches or perspectives to what Ralph Ruddock has called 'local studies'[24], where he suggests that perhaps forty of these would be enough for a community or local study of a small town, which would be 'intelligible in terms of the nature, experience and purposes of the individuals'. Following Ruddock, Colin Fletcher offers the following advice on the use of life histories in doing community studies:

> Life stories can be approached by interview, questionnaire, conversation or participant observation and a strict sample is made or the choice is guided by the commonsense rule of trying to be comprehensive. Shakespeare's 'seven ages of man' provoke useful discussion and disagreements. What follows is not a specimen account of how to organise life stories but an attempt to make the task interesting and rewarding for both parties. Where were people born and bred? What did they see of shops, shoppers and shopkeepers? Were there glimpses of the world of work? Who were their friends and where did they play? The initial experience is often the richest vein; first jobs, first loves, first strains with parents and affinities with voluntary groups. By this time what is being sought is the tone of growing up, having to grow up, and feeling for the world. What home or job changes have been made? There is often a mounting sense of frustration, new fantasies and private worlds develop, some of which can be quite frightening to share. Adulthood is approached cautiously, and the student must remember at all times why the approach was made.
>
> There is no reason why people should not be told the subject of study. They have their own views, they have both self and social criticisms. People constantly draw from mementoes, upon newspaper cuttings, upon pieces of local literature, upon letters they have sent or had returned, as well as photographs. A sketch emerges of typical and contrasting families. Some members may prefer to map out their own families or undertake a project upon local stereotypes. What has been said and the things which have been collected now form a virtual exhibition; and it is just this opportunity which can be taken. With an exhibition in a school hall or local library, or the window of a building society shop, a flow of information can arise. Course members and the tutor can try to be

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[21] Paul F. Armstrong, 'The myth of meeting needs in adult education and community development' *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 2, no. 2, Autumn 1982; pp. 24-37; and 'The "needs-meeting" ideology in liberal adult education' *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 1, no. 4, Spring 1983; pp. 293-321

[22] See, for example, George L. Mehaffy, *Oral History in the Classroom*, How To Do It Series 2, No. 8 (Washington DC: National Council for Social Studies, 1979)

[23] See Lorna M. Butler and Robert E. Howell, *Community Needs Assessment Techniques: Coping with Growth* (Corvallis, Oregon: Western Rural Development Center, Oregon State University, 1980)

[24] Ralph Ruddock, 'The sociology of adult education: a plea for humanism' *Studies in Adult Education*, vol. 3, no. 1, April 1971; pp. 15-27

> present to hear what the public has to say. Having taken, there should quickly be some giving, some reciprocity, and the community study has a long way to go yet.[25]

This use of the life history method for community study in teaching situations is not very different from the way in which it was used in the classic tradition by the Chicago School. Dollard, writing on the use of the life history in community studies, begins with the question:

> If all one knew about a community was what one got from a specific life history, what kind of perspective on it would one have? If there is realism in the dictum that the 'individual and society are aspects of one another' or that personality is the 'subjective aspects of culture' then one should be able to view the life history subject as a participant in various forms of group life.[26]

For Dollard, the life history as a tool for community study, is exploratory, for discerning the variables to be studied and measured, for picking out factors that are relevant to community life, but moreover it is a method best able to reveal the 'emotional forces bound by community life', so that

> If community studies are to include a realistic account of the emotional forces in society and are to discriminate accurately the difference in degree and type of participation within specific groups shown by different individuals, then we will find the intensive life history a material aid.[27]

Extending this practical value aspect, the life history has further potential. Recently within methodology there has been an increasing concern for more democratic and 'participatory' research techniques. Writing on research needs in adult education, J. Roby Kidd has said,

> ... what is needed is the utilisation of research methodologies so that people who will be affected by research outcomes can participate in identifying the problems, obtaining the data, analysing the data, and prescribing outcomes based on the research. A considerable and growing number of adult educationists and social scientists, in all the regions of the world, are working and sharing together under the rubric of 'participatory research' as they labour for improvement and extension of such methods.[28]

What is actually meant by 'participatory' research is not always clear; nor is the phrase used consistently. For some, it may simply mean showing the people under study what has been written about them; for others, it may involve holding a discussion/feedback session with the participants; whilst others would insist that real 'participatory' research should involve the subjects of the study at all stages of the research, as indicated by Roby Kidd.

Advances in 'participatory' research have been made by those trying to generate a feminist methodology. Ann Oakley has suggested that interviewing as a research

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[25] Colin Fletcher, 'Community studies as practical adult education' *Adult Education*, vol. 53, no. 2, July 1980; pp. 73-78

[26] John Dollard, 'The life history in community studies' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 3, no. 5, 1938; p. 724

[27] ibid; p. 737

[28] J. Roby Kidd, 'Research needs in adult education' *Studies in Adult Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, April 1981; p. 6

Advances in 'participatory' research have been made by those trying to generate a feminist methodology. Ann Oakley has suggested that interviewing as a research method is a 'masculine' practice, and proceeds to characterise the interview situation as one of inequality:

> interviewers define the role of interviewees as subordinates; extracting information is more to be valued than yielding it; the convention of the interviewer-interviewee hierarchy is a rationalisation of inequality; what is good for interviewers is not necessarily good for interviewees.[29]

This viewpoint has been taken further by Hilary Graham who has argued that the survey method reflects the ideology of nineteenth century western capitalism. Identifying a number of principles of the survey technique from contemporary research methods textbooks, she suggests that these principles 'mirror almost exactly those embodied within the ideology of nineteenth century capitalism'. As such the survey method can be seen as reflecting a form of labour relations operating within a market economy of a mass society:

> In this society, individuals are seen to behave as isolated and equivalent units of labour, sharing a homogenous culture which can be accurately and easily articulated in words.[30]

She proceeds:

> Like earlier critiques, this paper has pointed to the ways in which this model seriously distorts the nature of social reality, and particularly the social reality of women. Women do not experience the world from a position of insularity and equality, but from a complex web of asymmetrical social relationships. Their experiences, moreover, are defined through a language which originates outside these experiences, making 'survey speak' an incomplete and alienating form of communication.[31]

The significance of Graham's critique is that she wishes to go on to suggest alternative methods for a 'genuinely non-sexist discipline', and her discussion focuses on the life history method, as a reflection of the traditional way both men and women have recounted and recorded their experiences - through 'story-telling'.

The value of the life history method for feminism is that

> Firstly, story-telling rejects the individualism of survey research. Social surveys encourage respondents to reduce their experiences to fragments which can be captured in a question-and-answer format. Stories, by contrast, provide a vehicle through which individuals can build up and communicate the complexity of their lives. While surveys 'tear individuals from their social context', stories are pre-eminently ways of relating individuals and events to social contexts, ways of weaving personal experiences into their social fabric.

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[29] Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms' in Helen Roberts (ed), *Doing Feminist Research* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); p. 41

[30] Hilary Graham, 'Building a feminist methodology: the case of the survey method', paper delivered at British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, Manchester 1982;
p. 12; parts of this paper have been published as 'Do her answers fit his questions? Women and the survey method' in Eva Gamarnikow et. al. (eds), *The Public and the Private* (London: Heinemann, 1983); pp. 132-146; and as 'Surveying through stories' in Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (eds), *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Prospects* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); pp. 104-124

[31] Graham, 1982, op.cit;

> Secondly, stories provide a vehicle through which the existence and experience of inequality can be explored. ....
>
> Thirdly, stories do not demand that experiences and activities assume an object-form. Instead, stories illuminate the dynamic quality of experience, being themselves a process by which individuals make sense of past events and present circumstances. ...
>
> Fourthly, story-telling offers the possibility of developing alternative systems of measurement, alternative ways of classifying the social world. It offers the possibility of rescuing women from the status of 'non-data' without forcing them to express their experiences through the ordinal and ratio scales favoured by survey research.[32]

In her paper, Graham was not intending to attempt any assessment of the life history method *per se*, but only to highlight the argument that the survey method 'misrepresents the social world and experiences of women'. Consequently, she did not pursue the full potential of the method which - in breaking away from patriarchal practices - would have been revealed. This potential lies in the possibility of the life history technique as a 'collaborative' research strategy, through which both researcher and respondents would benefit.

This view of research is by no means new, but has been given a fresh impetus by recent developments in feminist methodology. The phrase ' collaborative interviewing' was coined[33] to refer to this practice of finding out about people through some kind of non-hierarchical relationship, which can only be established if 'the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship'.[34] Oakley found that she had to do this when interviewees began to ask her questions, and this they did frequently during the 'repeated interviews', through which a 'friendship' relationship began to develop - which necessitated the breakdown of any hierarchical relationship and the generation of a 'joint enterprise'.

In doing my own life history research (*see* **Chapter 4**), I can retrospectively see that the research process could have constituted a 'joint enterprise' in that a few of the subjects who supplied me with their autobiographies were pleased (and even flattered) to have been asked, and for most of them the exercise of writing their life stories or telling me about it during an intensive interview situation, turned out to be 'therapeutic' or even 'consciousness-raising'. One example comes to mind, which at the time I perceived negatively as a reactive effect of my research. I wanted to interview some people who had left the group that I was studying, but had great difficulty in actually finding any who had dropped out, and when I eventually did, I discovered that by talking to them they were stimulated to attend the group meetings again. This, of course, was unintentional, but brought home to me the 'participatory' nature of this type of research.

It is worth pointing out that in this respect this method contradicts the traditional ethic of leaving the subjects as they are found, unaffected by the research process, but then most participatory, action and even evaluation research would have a similar effect, and thus is not peculiar to life history research. Rather than being seen as an ethical problem, this can be turned into a research strength, and taken even further by seeing research as a form of praxis. Most ethical canons guiding social and educational research originate from a particular ideological stance, which has built into it traditional notions of the distinction between researcher and researched, interviewer and interviewee. experimenter and subject, and so on. As feminist methodology is demonstrating, the research relationship can be conceived in alternative ways, characterised by more equality, and increased blurring of the research roles. An extension of this is to see research as not a one-sided, value-neutral activity, but a strategy of emancipation, bringing together the trends found in feminist research, neo-Marxist critical ethnography[35], and participatory research of the Freirean 'empowering' type[36]:

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[32] ibid; pp. 13-14

[33] See, for example, Barbara Laslett and Rhona Rapoport, 'Collaborative interviewing and interactive research' *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, November 1975; pp. 968-977

[34] Ann Oakley. op. cit; p. 41

> Each of these research programs opposes prevailing scientific norms as inherently supportive of the status quo; each is premised on a 'transformative agenda' with respect to both social structure and methodological norms; each is, in other words, concerned with research as praxis.[37]

The argument is that a more collaborative approach to critical research is needed to empower the researched, to contribute to the construction of critical theory. As Lather indicates, this area of development is still in its early stages, and subject to ongoing debate, mainly of an 'armchair' variety. And so, at this stage, it would be possible to make too much of this, and make too great a claim for the potential of the life history technique here. In a study of married women's position in the labour market, part of Green and Parry's methodology consisted of the life history technique. They were influenced by the need for 'collaborative interviewing', and, like Oakley, used the 'repeated interview' technique, but found themselves up against a contradiction: whilst their interviewees' accounts were interesting and valid in their own right, the interviewers were faced with the methodological problem of restructuring them into a form that fitted their analytical framework. They recognised their subjects' life histories as too coherent and ordered, which glossed over underlying conflicts, and thus not giving the whole story. In re-ordering their stories, or following up aspects the researchers felt were neglected, not only were they not being true to the women's own stories, but were recreating a hierarchical power relationship they had been seeking to avoid.[38]

Such contradictions have to be confronted and resolved if progress is to be on the development of an alternative strategy in social and educational research. Even with the use of life histories, there is a danger that the subjects under study will be treated as objects. This problem is at the back of Cottle's mind when he asks: 'how do we overcome the differences that showed in the instant of our first encounter, and the advantages I possess by nature of my position in the society and my role in conducting the research?'[39] Cottle set out to establish a long-term friendship with his families he was to study, getting to know them for at least two years before taking any notes. Nevertheless, he still felt moved to say:

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[35] Two examples are Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Kids Get Working-Class Jobs* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977) and V. Masemann, 'Critical ethnography in the study of comparative education' *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 26, 1982; pp. 1-15

[36] See Budd Hall, 'Participatory research: an approach for change' *Prospects*, vol. 8. no. 2, 1975; pp. 24-31 and 'The democratisation of research in adult and non-formal education' in P.Reason and J.Rowan (eds), *Human Inquiry* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981)

[37] Patti Lather, 'Research as praxis' *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 56, no. 3, August 1986; pp. 257-277

[38] E.Green and J.Parry, 'Permanently "temporary": contradictions in the lives of married women workers', paper delivered to British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, Manchester, April 1982

> In one regard, I am still another person coming to their home uninvited, ready to take something from them. In another sense, they may feel that my presence, like that of any researcher, means a chance to talk and be heard, to be recognised, and maybe, too, honoured by this new friendship, however contrived it may seem at first. And so I do my best to convince them of my interest in them, and express my hope that they might be willing to share some hours with me.[40]

By allowing the families to read the manuscript, to then ask them for their permission to have it published, their friendship - says Cottle - was affirmed. But still the doubt remains that such friendships are contrived, that 'collaborative' research still involves hierarchical relationships. What I am suggesting here, therefore, is merely that the life history has potential value as a non-exploitative, non-oppressive form of social research.

Finally, it has to be said that one distinct advantage the life history has over other methods of social and educational research is that it is generally readable:

> A good life history reads like a novel. Beginning with the objective facts, the reader is taken through his protagonist's life, one step at a time. The hero's reactions to each critical event are carefully detailed, and often presented in the light of other reactions and interpretations. The central figure in a life history presents the world through his own eyes.
>
> Finally life histories are like novels in that novelists, just like sociologists, interpret the experiences of their subjects within special theoretical frameworks. ... A sociological life history is at once literary and theoretical. Without a theory to guide the facts, a life history becomes bare description. Good life histories, like good novels, offer the reader a way of interpreting the findings.[41]

Being readable, both the data and the theory contained in the 'good' life history become more accessible to the readers, and enable them to grasp more easily the phenomenon under study, facilitating understanding, and thereby informing action, which in turn will contribute to the development of theory.

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[39] Thomas J. Cottle, 'The life-study: on mutual recognition and the subjective inquiry' *Urban Life and Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, October 1973; pp. 344-360; reprinted in Robert G. Burgess (ed), *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982); p. 123

[40] ibid;

[41] Norman K. Denzin (ed), *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook* (London: Butterworth, 1970); p. 471

Chapter Three WHAT IS THE LIFE HISTORY METHOD?

It is not my intention in this chapter to attempt to define the life history method, nor to distinguish 'life history' from any other phrase which might be used to convey the same kind of technique. such as 'life story', 'biography', 'autobiography', and so on. This has been done in a footnote by Bertaux[1], and this leaves me free to present what I see as the essential characteristics of the life history approach, some of which are implicit in the previous chapter. These will need making explicit, and at the same time we need to consider some of the problems and difficulties inherent in the approach, before we can proceed to examine how the method has been used in practice. In doing this it should be clear that there is no one single life history method, but a range of strategies which can be employed, built around the construction and analysis of individuals' biographies, which yet have some common characteristics.

The life history as an investigative social science methodology was developed and utilised by the Chicago School of Sociology in the 1920s and 1930s, when Shaw was able to refer to it as 'a comparatively new device of sociological research', although it had been, and continues to be, used in other fields, particularly anthropology and psychology. The first major sociological life history was that of Wladek - The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, written by Thomas and Znaniecki in 1918 as part of their study of the immigrant polish peasant in American society. As well as Wladek's biography, personal documents (762 letters written by Polish immigrants to their families in Poland) were used in this vast study. For the authors, the life history constituted the 'perfect' type of sociological material:

> In analysing the experience and attitudes of an individual, we always reach data and elementary facts which are not exclusively limited to this individual's personality, but can be treated as mere instances of more or less general classes of data or facts, and can thus be used for the determination of laws of social becoming. Whether we draw our materials for sociological analysis from detailed life records of concrete individuals or from the observation of mass phenomena, the problems of sociological analysis are the same. But even when we are searching for abstract laws, life records, as complete as possible, constitute the perfect type of sociological material, and that if social science has to use other materials at all it is only because of the practical difficulty of obtaining at the moment a sufficient number of such records to cover the totality of sociological problems, and of the enormous amount of work demanded for an adequate analysis of all the personal materials necessary to characterise the life of a social group. If we are forced to use mass phenomena as material, or any kind of happenings taken without regard to the life histories of the individuals who participate in them, it is a defect, not an advantage, of our present sociological method.[2]

Within a few years of this powerful claim, Shaw and some of his colleagues in the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago were beginning to develop this method of data collection which has since become the trade mark of the work of that department. Faris describes how Shaw obtained his data for *The Jack Roller* and his other two books based on life histories:

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[1] Daniel Bertaux (ed), *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences* (London: Sage, 1981); pp. 7-9

[2] William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York : Alfred Knopf, 1927); pp. 1832-1833

> Shaw's customary procedure in getting a life history was to persuade a boy in a correctional institution to write it for him by convincing him that no authorities would have the information and promising that it would be used for research purposes only. In a typical case a boy would first write only a brief account of his whole life. Shaw would then have it expanded by pointing to a particular section, remarking that it interested him, and asking for more details on that part. This procedure was repeated for other sections, and sometimes for parts within an expanded section. Three of these life histories were even enlarged to book length.[3]

In the introduction to the 1966 edition of Shaw's *The Jack Roller*, Becker states what the life history is not:

> The life history is not conventional social science 'data' although it has some of the features of that kind of fact, being an attempt to gather material useful in the formulation of general sociological theory. Nor is it a conventional autobiography, although it shares with autobiography its narrative form, its first-person point of view and its frankly subjective stance. It is certainly not fiction, although the best life history documents have a sensitivity and pace, a dramatic urgency, that any novelist would be glad to achieve.

He then proceeds to be more constructive, and tells us what the life history method is for sociological researchers:

> As opposed to these more imaginative and humanistic forms, the life history is more down to earth, more devoted to our purposes than those of the author, less concerned with artistic values than with a faithful rendering of the subject's experience and interpretation of the world he lives in. The sociologist who gathers a life history takes steps to ensure that it covers everything we want to know, that no important fact or event is slighted, that what purports to be factual squares with other available evidence and that the subject's interpretations are honestly given. The sociologist keeps the subject oriented to the questions sociology is interested in, asks him about events that require amplification, tries to make the story jibe with matters of official record and with material furnished by others familiar with the person, event, or place being described.[4]

In this way the data obtained are descriptive or qualitative and have much in common with other research techniques, particularly participant observation, as Denzin notes:

> The life history parallels participant observation. Its basic difference lies in the breadth of coverage, not in causal intent. Instead of observing an entire organisation, the user of the life history will select for analysis critical informants within an organisation. He will piece together those persons' organisational experiences with all data that can be collected. The basic theme of any life history is the construction of a set of explanations that reflect one person's or group's subjective experiences toward a pre-determined set of events. These may range from how one became an organisational member to more specific interests in deviant careers, or immigration experiences. It is important to keep in mind that the basic theme of the life history is the presentation of experience from the perspective of the focal subject or subjects. Their world must be penetrated and understood. Once it is entered, the observer lays out the critical-objective experiences relevant to that world and then has his subject react to those events. In this way the subject's definition of the situation is compared to the objective events ... In addition to recording the objective events and

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[3] Robert E. L. Faris, *Chicago Sociology, 1920-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); pp. 75-76

[4] Howard Becker, 'Introduction' to Clifford R. Shaw, *The Jack Roller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); pp. v-vi

> **eliciting a subject's definitions of those events, the perspectives of other persons involved in those events will also be recorded ... By fitting these different perspectives together, the investigator develops a comprehensive explanation of how his subject's experiences reflect variations in the social situation. Unless a comparative-other-person focus is maintained, the life history only presents one person's point of view. To understand how that person's perspective came into existence, and to understand its veracity, other interpretations have to be gathered. If they are not, an individualistic-psychologistic analysis is prepared. To be sociologically acceptable, the life history has to move from such interpretation to social structure. The investigator must show how his subject's definitions reflect membership in various units of social organisation. These units will range from intimate relationships,small, tightly- knit social groups to large organisations, or event total societies.**[5]

DATA COLLECTION

From these two extracts arise a number of central issues to be discussed. To begin with, we should ask how researchers can penetrate and understand the world of their subjects, as Denzin suggests. The initial task is to decide the most appropriate strategy. There appear to be two main alternatives. We could, for example, like Shaw and Bogdan. focus on the life story of one individual, which is the typical form of biography: an intensive, comprehensive narrative of one person's life story. This complete life history attempts to cover the entire sweep of the subject's life experiences. It is inevitably long, many-sided and complex, and includes the individual's own accounts, the social and cultural situation to which they respond, and the sequence of past experiences and situations in those individuals' lives. The alternative strategy would be to collect multiple biographies within the same or similar area of research. This is an approach taken in four of the five examples presented in the next chapter. Obviously, using this strategy, the depth and detail cannot be so great for each individual, and the form of the life history has to be either 'topical', which shares all the features of the complete form, except that only one phase of the subject's life is presented, or 'edited'. which may be either topical or complete. Repetition is edited out, and not all aspects are dealt with in detail, but the selection of what to emphasise and what to omit is problematic.

The advantage of the multiple approach is that it is more likely to meet the criteria for external validity, or representativeness. The single biography is the case study approach, which has much value in bringing together the theory and reality of a particular area of research, but it is risky to generalise from one case study, since it is most unlikely to be 'typical'. The multiple biographies approach, by abstracting dominant themes, makes it possible to generalise to one type by showing that certain biographies have, for all the idiosyncracy, some essentially common elements. This would probably not satisfy many methodologists who would argue that nothing short of a ten per cent sample could adequately meet the criteria of external validity. It is possible to argue that however large the sample, and however randomly selected, external validity is never certain, and perhaps there is undue concern about this placed on case study approaches. Some of the items included in the **Methodology** section of the annotated bibliography in **Part III** address this issue of validity. If, as Bogdan does, one makes it clear that the researcher is making no claims for representativeness of a single case study or multiple biographies, then one avoids possible criticism on these grounds.

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[5] Norman K. Denzin (ed), *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook* (London: Butterworths, 1970); pp. 415-416

One disadvantage of the 'edited' life history is that it increases the possibility of distortion. Indeed, a common criticism one hears made of the life history method is that it is low in reliability insofar as if the same subject or subjects were approached by a different researcher but for the same purpose, the final product is likely to be different. This may be so, but is equally true of all other research methods. In any case, the distortion is more likely to occur at the data analysis stage rather than in data collection. Certainly, during data collection one can be careful to make checks as to the 'truth' of what the subject is telling us. As both Becker and Denzin hint, the 'honesty' of the respondents is not usually a problem, at least no more than with any other method which requires asking subjects for information, facts, attitudes or opinions. As Becker says, the role of the researcher is to make 'the story jibe with matters of official record' and material furnished by others, or what Denzin calls the 'comparative-other-person focus'. In the examples given below there is a clear concern for ensuring the reliability of the data collected. In particular, Bogdan is at pains to stress that although he had no reason to suppose that Jane Fry deliberately tried to mislead him, as a social scientist he had a duty to check her story as far as possible. In my own research, I made a different assumption, for it is clear that subjects may not deliberately seek to mislead, but it is likely that some unintentional distortion has taken place (what I refer to as 'retrospective reinterpretation' of events), and I seek to identify some of the possible sources of distortion which must then be taken into account when reading these life histories (*see* next chapter).

Some checks on reliability are facilitated if one collects the life history data orally rather than in written form. Stimson has called the oral self-reported life history a 'biologue'[6] and Abel proposed calling the life stories, written on request and intended as research data, 'biograms'[7]. The examples given in the next chapter employ both biologues and biograms, and the two are not mutually exclusive. In both Leonard's and my own study, an attempt was made to obtain biograms, or written (auto)biographies, but these were then supplemented with material obtained through follow-up interviews, which also provided an opportunity to check the reliability of the biogram data. An obvious problem of using biograms as opposed to biologues is to actually obtain them, since it can be quite difficult to persuade some subjects to put pen to paper. Although it is difficult to generalise, it may be possible to over come this through the use of imagination. Abel, for example, discusses the feasibility of obtaining biograms through 'prize contests', in order to get people to submit written descriptions of their lives, their work, their thoughts and desires. In one study using this competition strategy, the researchers received 1,544 biograms[8]. A strategy I have employed with adult students returning to study is to give them an exercise in essay writing, on the theme of 'How I came to enrol on this course', which gives them the opportunity not just to practise their essay writing skills, nor for the tutor to diagnose their likely communication problems, but also for the students to begin to analyse their motivation for wanting to do the course, and the process a substantial amount of data is generated, which could subsequently be used in a study of adult students employing the life history method.

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[6] Gerry Stimson, 'Biography and retrospect: some problems in the study of life history', paper delivered at the British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, Manchester, April 1976

[7] Theodore Abel, 'The nature and use of biograms' *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1947; pp. 111-118

[8] Josef Chalasinski, *The Young Peasant Generation in Poland* (Warsaw, 1938), cited by Abel, op.cit; pp. 114-115

In one way the biologue is easier and more acceptable as a form of data collection, providing one is sufficiently skilled in interviewing techniques. Although the interviewing skills are probably no different for life history than for any other interview research, Cavan[9] has produced a systematic study of the methods used in securing life history data of clients by social workers and clinicians. She emphasises the qualities and attitudes of 'successful' interviwers, suggests how to handle the interview situation, how to record the interview, before discussing the need for specific life history schedules. Since this article was written in the late 1920s, the emphasis is on stenography and note-taking. But today the tape-recorder, as Lewis mentions in the extract in the next chapter, has made possible a new kind of 'literature of social realism', and, of course, whereas the biogram could not be used with the illiterate or uneducated, the tape recorder makes it possible to obtain life history data orally from such subjects.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data derived from the life history method is in large part qualitative data analysis. In recent years there has been growing attention paid to making sense of qualitative data because in many ways it is quite different to the analysis of quantitative data. This is reflected in the whole research process. In quantitative research, typically, the researcher would employ a version of the 'hypothetico-deductive' model; that is, the researcher would begin with a hunch, formulate a hypothesis or a series of hypotheses, collect data, analyse that data, and on the basis of that accept or reject the original hypothesis, often with the idea of producing or modifying a theory. Qualitative research, as we have seen, does not typically begin with preconceived hypotheses which it seeks to test through qualitative data analysis; nor does it have the same sequential stages of research. More usually, data collection and data analysis are intertwined, so that the researcher is constantly moving between the two, and each is influenced by the other. That is, data collection and data analysis are overlapping, not discrete, stages of research. This is not to say that the qualitative researcher does not generate and test theories, but the analysis operates simultaneously, at many levels of abstraction.

In the early stages of the research, the researchers may be concerned with generating what might be considered 'promising' theoretical ideas, and may concentrate - like the quantitative researcher - on hunches, or what in qualitative research is referred to as 'foreshadowed problems'. No researcher ever goes into any research situation with a completely open mind as to what they might expect to find. Indeed, the very choice of the research topic and how the research might be carried out is a reflection of such foreshadowed problems. The researcher has to remain alert to the possibility of finding and following up promising lines of enquiry. Often these can be triggered off by existing theoretical models or analogies. In my own research, my promising lines of analysis emerged from employing concepts from a particular sociological perspective, such as 'career', 'identity'. 'process', and merging them with concepts borrowed from the sociology of religion, such as 'charisma' and 'conversion', and from the sociology of organisations and social movements. These theoretical concepts were put together to form a model with whichto look at the phenomena under study. In qualitative research, theoretical concepts and models often provide important starting-points, but not through simply testing those pre-existing theories, nor applying existing theories to new areas, for the theory is developed and even transformed in the process of data analysis.

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[9] Ruth S. Cavan, 'Interviewing for life history material' *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1929; pp. 100-115

Once ideas begin to be generated through the analysis, the whole process gradually becomes more systematic. Through 'progressive focusing', the ideas become clearer, and so does the focal point of the research. In the process some ideas may well be discarded as not fruitful avenues to go down, whereas new ones may be opened up, adding to the construction of the typology or the model being worked with. It is for this reason that the qualitative researcher, using case studies, need not be unduly concerned with the methodological issue of external validity, as mentioned earlier. Instead of being governed by the need to satisfy the demands of statistical random sampling, the qualitative researcher employs a technique known as 'theoretical sampling'. Essentially this involves selecting cases to include in the research, not on the basis of randomness nor concerns for typicality and representativeness, nor in advance of, but concurrent with, the data collection stage. Each new case is compared with previously selected cases, so as to generate new categories of analysis, modify typologies, or - ultimately, when no new analyses are forthcoming from the data - to confirm the model or typology. When reached, this situation is often referred to as 'theoretical saturation', and the process of analysis using this approach is referred to by Glaser and Strauss as the 'constant comparative method'. This is the process by which emergent ideas can be developed into a model of social processes occurring in a particular setting. Based on their own research on dying patients, this is how Glaser and Strauss describe the process in action:

> The analyst starts thinking in terms of the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimised, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties. For example, while constantly comparing incidents on how nurses respond to the social loss of dying patients, we realised that some patients are perceived as a high social loss and others as a low social loss, and that patient care tend to vary positively with degree of social loss. It was also apparent that some social attributes that nurses combine to establish a degree of social loss are seen immediately (age, ethnic group, social class), while some are learned after time is spent with the patient (occupational worth, marital status, education). This observation led us to the realisation that perceived social loss can change as new attributes of the patients are learned. It also became apparent, from studying the comparison groups, under what conditions (types of wards and hospitals) we would find clusters of patients with different degrees of social loss ....[10]

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[10] Barry Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968); p. 106

Following this process the model begins to emerge, as new categories are generated and related to one another in a variety of ways, and a pattern of structure begins to appear in an integrated way through this series of constant comparisons of new cases with what has already been discovered:

> Thus, we soon found that calculating and re-calculating of social loss by nurses was related to their development of a social loss 'story' about the patient. When asked about a dying patient, nurses would tell what amounted to a story about him. The ingredients of this story consisted of a continual balancing out of social loss factors as the nurses learned more about the patient. Both the calculus of social loss and the social loss story were related to the nurse's strategies for coping with the upsetting impact on her professional composure of, say, a dying patient with a high social loss (e.g. a mother with two children). This example further shows that the category becomes integrated with other categories of analysis: the social loss of the dying patient is related to how nurses maintain professional composure while attending his dying. Thus the theory develops, as different categories and their properties tend to become integrated through constant comparisons that force the analyst to make some theoretical sense of each comparison.[11]

Whilst this qualitative data analysis strategy is useful in generating models and typologies, it does not provide a rigorous or systematic test of them. As was pointed out earlier, qualitative analysis can be used for the purpose of generating and testing theories with universal applicability. One particular procedure for doing this is known as the process of 'analytic induction'. This is a form of the constant comparative method, but in this the emphasis is on sampling for cases that will falsify the model or typology. Reflecting Popper's principle of falsifiability[12], this process is constructed around the assumption that it is not possible to actually prove anything in the social sciences, and so it is the responsibility of social scientists to seek to refute theories by seeking out disconfirmatory evidence from their data, and in the process modifying the theory until no further contradictory evidence is found. In this way, theoretical saturation is reached when new cases sampled fail to produce disconfirmatory evidence.

There have been relatively few qualitative research studies that have attempted to use this method of analytic induction to test theories, though it has been used in particular settings to check the validity of descriptions and explanations produced in analysis, and exceptionally, as in Lindesmith's research on opiate addiction[13], to try to establish universal patterns of causality across a range of settings and groups. Lindesmith, in attempting to develop a sociological theory of opiate addiction, tentatively formulated a hypothesis that individuals who did not know what drug they were receiving would not become addicted, and conversely, if they knew what drug they were taking, they were more likely to become an addict. Disconfirmatory evidence forced Lindesmith to reformulate his initial hypothesis to take account of the new evidence, and his new hypothesis was more powerful, but new cases required further revisions, until his final hypothesis, a chain of propositions about the use and perception of opiates, receiving no further contradictory evidence, furnished a simple but effective explanation, not only of the manner in which addiction becomes established, but also of the essential features of addiction which are found in addiction all over the world, and common in all cases, having been built up through theoretical sampling in the search for negative cases.

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[11] ibid; p. 107

[12] Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1968; 2nd ed.)

[13] A.R.Lindesmith, *Opiate Addiction* (Bloomington: Principa Press, 1947); and *Addiction and Opiates* (Chicago: Aldine Press, 1968)

There is some debate about the conduct of this and other research that has utilised analytic induction, such as Cressey's research on embezzlement[14]. This criticism tends to focus on the procedures used to find negative cases through theoretical sampling[15], though some social scientists doubt the logic of the procedure, suggesting that it is impossible for social scientists to ever find universal laws of human behaviour. Nevertheless, qualitative data analysis has developed to the point that analytic induction may be used effectively to test accounts of social processes within particular societies and cultures, and within particular settings.[16]

To move the discussion back from general issues of qualitative data analysis, to those specific to the life history method, it will be apparent that whether single or multiple biographies are collected will influence the kind of data one obtains. In my own research, I felt that the biographical data obtained through interviews were less satisfactory than written (auto)biographies, mainly because the written biography, or the biogram, gave the respondents more time for thought and organisation. Nevertheless, no doubt more skilful interviewers than myself are able to collect systematic data through intensive life history interviews, especially if they use a schedule derived from other people's life histories, as Bossard does. But as Bogdan shows, it is possible to gather oral life history data relatively unsystematically, and then it is the task of the analyst to range that data in some kind of sequential or other kind of order. In this way the data analysts inevitably impose themselves on the data, which, of course, they do from the very moment they ask potential subjects for their life histories. The researchers continue this imposition in the way that the data are finally presented. This generally requires some editing and analysis, for without such intrusion the life history has to stand as its own social research document, as both Bogdan's and Lewis's do, though both studies are prefaced with fairly lengthy introductions in which they explain their methodological strategies and theoretical positions.

Most of the life history material is presented as qualitative description, whether edited or not, in the form of quotes or extracts of varying length, interspersed with comments and analyses. But as both Bossard's and Leonard's studies suggest, it is possible to use life history data for statistical analyses. This is the approach used by Cavan, Hauser and Stouffer, analysing 600 life history documents collected by the 'Sub-Committee on the Function of Home Activities in the Education of the Child under Section IIIA of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection'.[17] The point of the exercise was to determine the relationship of various factors in students' lives to other factors and to such things as personality traits. In order to do this statistically, a key had to be drawn up by means of which each life history could be analysed.

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[14] Donald R. Cressey, 'The criminal violation of financial trust' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 15, 1950

[15] See Norman K. Denzin (ed), op.cit; pp. 195-197

[16] For a more detailed account of general issues in qualitative data analysis, see Paul Atkinson and Martin Hammersley, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Tavistock, 1983)

[17] Ruth S. Cavan, Philip M. Hauser and Samuel A. Stouffer, 'Note on the statistical treatment of life-history material' *Social Forces*, vol. 9, 1930; pp. 200-203; reprinted in Norman K. Denzin (ed), op.cit; pp. 436-441

> For each factor upon which the documents presumably contained data, a series of categories was arranged, graded wherever possible. Thus, with reference to the factor of 'social development of child by parents', three categories were used: (1) encouraged, pushed forward, urged on; (2) allowed to follow own tendencies, not encouraged; (3) held back, discouraged. The person who analysed the document then determined from reading the paper the category into which a particular case fell.[18]

This task proved to be quite complex, using a committee of twelve graduate students and the director of the project. Each member read five life history documents, making a list of factors found in each case, the results were then pooled and a sub-committee of three persons worked out a master list of factors and categories. The resultant key was very long and had to be shortened by eliminating factors not considered most relevant to the study. The master key was then given to each committee member, and following a trial as a large group, they then split into pairs to try out the key which was subsequently amended as terms were re-defined. The final key was a list of 51 factors and 194 categories. This was a very lengthy process, particularly as at a later stage checks on reliability and validity were built in, which leaves the authors to

> agree with those who doubt the economy, though not the possibility of treating life history materials quantitatively in practice ....practically the same results can be obtained by classifying categorical responses to a direct questionnaire as by classifying inferences, obtained with far greater labour, from life histories.[19]

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Finally, one further traditional methodological consideration raised by both Bogdan and Leonard is to do with the ethics of doing such research. Like all research, one must stress confidentiality and anonymity of subjects, respecting their individuality and wishes. Of course, some subjects might not wish to be disguised by the use of pseudonyms, but generally it is thought important that the subject be protected, or - as in the case of Jane Fry - fictitious names were used to protect friends, and relatives, as well as Jane herself, although according to Jane, 'The names have been changed to protect the guilty'[20].

In my own research, I automatically used pseudonyms to the point of often referring to or even calling the subjects by their fictitious names. Nevertheless, mainly because of the amount of detail provided, it would certainly have been possible for subjects to recognise not just themselves, but other participants in the same study. This was one reason for a little reluctance on my part to have the study published, for without changing some biographical detail, which would have a distorting effect, the anonymity of the subjects could not be guaranteed. This is not a problem in all life history research, but if Lewis's work, for example, is accurate (and I have no reason to doubt it), the Sanchez family would most certainly be recognisable. Perhaps the only justification would be the presumption that few, if any, residents of the Casa Grande would ever get hold of a copy of *The Children of Sanchez.*

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[18] ibid; p. 437

[19] ibid; p. 441

[20] Robert Bogdan (ed), *Being Different: The Autobiography of Jane Fry* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974); p. 8

There is an alternative view to be considered here. Whenever the issue of ethics and confidentiality is raised, this reminds us of the traditional bias of much research, and reflects the power of the researcher over the subject, and in a sense this concern is at the same time patronising in the effort to restore the balance. The alternative view of life history research as consciousness-raising technique in a praxical sense, should obviate the need to be unduly concerned with this traditional issue, since the researcher should no longer be a powerholder and the subjects powerless. The two are working in collaboration, and in theory the outcome should not be damage to the individual but to the benefit of all. In practice, a realistic assumption is that engaging in 'subversive' political research against the dominant and commonsense perspectives might mean that the interests of some individuals have to be sacrificed in the interests of the common good, and if this happens, the researcher is forced to confront the contradiction between individuals and their society.

Chapter Four SOME EXAMPLES

In this chapter the intention is to present some examples of pieces of research which have employed the life history method to demonstrate its diverse application, the range of strategies employed in data collection, techniques of data analysis, and the value of this approach as expressed in the researchers reasons for selecting to use this method, as well as to highlight some of the problems they faced in doing biographical work. What this chapter does not intend to do is the kind of exercise carried out by John Dollard over thirty years ago, when he observed that the life history method was still a 'much suspected tool of research and no comfortable certainty exists as to what an adequate life history document will eventually look like'[1]. He noted that it was, at the time, playing an increasingly important role in a number of disciplines: psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, history, literature, as well as sociology and social work. What Dollard tried to do was to provide a *scientific* basis for the method, by offering a 'blend structure of principles from the fields of cultural studies and clinical psychology'.[2] Beginning with a commonsense definition of life history as a 'deliberate attempt to define the growth of a person in a cultural milieu and to make theoretical sense of it'[3], Dollard produced a list of criteria for judging the 'adequacy' of the life history document. The seven[4] criteria are developed 'from direct experience in the life history field, deriving as it does from both cultural and psychological sources'[5]. After a discussion of these seven criteria, they are applied in six different cases ranging from Adlerian and Freudian case studies to Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant* and Shaw's *The Jack Roller*. These criteria are intended for use as a technique for evaluating such life history documents.

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[1] John Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History* (New Haven: Conneticut: Yale University, 1933; reprinted 1949); pp. 1-2

[2] ibid; p.2

[3] ibid; p.3

[4] These seven criteria are:

I. The subject must be viewed as a specimen in a cultural series.
II. The organic motors of action ascribed must be socially relevant.
III. The peculiar role of the family group in transmitting the culture must be recognised.
IV. The specific method of elaboration of organic materials into social behaviour must be shown.
V. The continuous related character of experience from childhood through adulthood must be stressed.
VI. The 'social situation' must be carefully and continuously specified as a factor,
VII. The life history material itself must be organised and conceptualised.

- ibid; p. 7

[5] ibid; p. 11

Rather than pursue this attempt to 'scientise' the life history method, each example is presented in the author's own words, and any evaluation must be considered in terms of how far our understanding of the phenomenon under study is furthered through a reading of the life history materials. The only criteria used in the selection of the examples included here was whether the authors had made available some kind of commentary on the use of the life history method, and at the same time an attempt is made to demonstrate the diversity of its use in social and educational research, as well as the idiosyncratic nature of some of the difficulties encountered in doing such research.

I. Oscar Lewis, The Children of Sanchez (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1964)

Oscar Lewis is anthropologist who has written extensively on the 'culture of poverty'. This particular work is about a poor family in Mexico City, Jesus Sanchez and his four children. The purpose of Lewis's research is to provide 'an inside view of family life', in order to show what it means to grow up in a one-roomed slum tenement home in the centre of a rapidly changing and developing Latin American city.

Extracts from **Introduction**:

[...] In *Five Families*, I tried to give the reader some glimpses of daily life in five ordinary Mexican families, on five perfectly ordinary days. In this volume I offer the reader a deeper look into the lives of one of these families by the use of a new technique whereby each member of the family tells his own life-story in his own words. This approach gives us a cumulative, multi-faceted, panoramic view of each individual, of the family as a whole, and of many aspects of lower-class Mexican life. The independent versions of the same incidents given by various family members provide a built-in check upon the reliability and validity of much of the data and thereby partially offsets the subjectivity inherent in a single autobiography. At the same time it reveals that discrepancies in the way events are recalled by each member of the family.

This method of multiple biographies also tends to reduce the element of investigator bias because the accounts are not put through the sieve of a middle-class North American mind but are given in the words of the subjects themselves. In this way, I believe I have avoided the two most common hazards in the study of the poor, namely, over-sentimentalisation and brutalisation. Finally, I hope that this method preserves for the reader the emotional satisfaction and understanding which the anthropologist experiences in working directly with his subjects, but which is only rarely conveyed in the formal jargon of anthropological monographs.

[...]

The tape recorder, used in taking down the life-stories in this book, has made possible the beginning of a new kind of literature of social realism. With the aid of the tape recorder, unskilled, uneducated, and even illiterate persons can talk about themselves and relate their observations and experiences in an uninhibited, spontaneous and natural manner.

[...]

Certainly, the lives of the poor are not dull. The stories in this volume reveal a world of violence and death, of suffering and deprivation, of infidelity and broken homes, of delinquency, corruption and police brutality, and of cruelty of the poor to the poor. These stories also reveal an intensity of feeling and human warmth, a strong sense of individuality, a capacity for gaiety, a hope for a better life, a desire for understanding and love, a readiness to share the little they possess, and the courage to carry on in the face of many unresolved problems.

[...]

The Sanchez family was one of a random sample of seventy-one families selected for study in the Casa Grande. Jesus Sanchez was in the middle-income group in the *vecindad*, earning a wage of 12.50 pesos, or $1 a day, as a food buyer in the La Gloria restaurant. He could hardly support even himself on this amount and supplemented his income by selling lottery tickets, by raising and selling pigs, pigeons, chickens and signing birds, and, in all probability, by receiving 'commissions' in the markets. [...]

I was introduced to the Sanchez household by one of my *vecindad* friends. On my first visit I found the door ajar, and as I waited for someone to answer my knock, I could see the rather dreary, run-down interior. [....]

[...] I explained that I was a North American professor and anthropologist and had spent a number of years living in a Mexican village studying its customs. I was now comparing the life of the city vecindad families with that of the village and was looking for people in the Casa Grande who would be willing to help me.

To get things started, I asked where they thought people were better off, in the country or in the city. After a few questions of this nature, which I had used to advantage in previous interviews, I began at once with some of the items on my first questionnaire. These called for the sex, age, place of birth, education, occupation, and work-history of each family member.

I was almost finished with these questions when the father, Jesus Sanchez, walked in brusquely ... He answered my questions in short order, stating that country life was far superior to city life because the young became corrupt in the city, especially when they did not know how to take advantage of what the city offered. He then said he was in a hurry and left as abruptly as he had entered.

[...]

In the weeks and months that followed. I continued my work with the other sample families in the *vecindad*. I had completed the data I needed on the Sanchez family after four interviews, but I would frequently stop at the Sanchez house to chat casually ... As I began to learn something about each member of the family, I became aware that this single family seemed to illustrate many of the social and psychological problems of lower-class Mexican life. At this point, I decided to try a study in depth. First {the children} agreed to tell me their life-stories, stories which were taped with their knowledge and permission. [...] My work with Jesus began after I had been studying his children for six months. It was difficult to gain his confidence, but when he finally agreed to allow me to record his life-story, this further enhanced my relationship with his children.

Because of the need for privacy in obtaining an independent version of each life history, most of the recording was done in my office and home. Most of the sessions were recorded individually, but on my return visit to Mexico in 1957, 1958 and 1959, I managed to have group discussion with two or three family members at a time. Occasionally, I recorded at their home in the Casa Grande. However, they talked more freely when they were away from the *vecindad*. I also found it helpful to keep the microphone out of their sight by attaching it to their clothing; in this way we could carry on our conversation as if it weren't there.

In obtaining the detailed and intimate data of these life stories, I used no secret techniques, no truth drugs, no psychoanalytic couch. The most effective tools of the anthropologist are sympathy and compassion for the people he studies. What began as a professional interest in their lives turned into warm and lasting friendships. I became deeply involved in their problems and often felt as though I had two families to look after, the Sanchez family and my own. I have spent hundreds of hours with members of the family; and I have eaten in their homes, have attended their dances and festive occasions, have accompanied them to their places of work, have met their relatives and friends, have gone with them on pilgrimages, to church, to the movies, and to sports events.

The Sanchez family learned to trust and confide in me. They would call upon me and my wife in times of need or crisis, and we helped them through illness, drunkenness, trouble with the police, unemployment, and family quarrels. I did not follow the common anthropological practice of paying them as informants (not informers!), and I was struck by the absence of monetary motivation in their relationship with me. Basically, it was their sense of friendship that led them to tell me their life stories. The reader should not underestimate their courage in bringing forth as they did the many painful memories and experiences of their lives. To some extent this served as a catharsis and relieved their anxieties. They were moved by my sustained interest in them, and my return to Mexico year after year was a crucial factor in increasing their confidence. Their positive image of the United States as a 'superior' country undoubtedly enhanced my status with them and placed me in the role of a benevolent authority figure rather than the punishing one they were so accustomed to in their own father. Their identification with my work and their sense of participation in a scientific research project, however vaguely they conceived of its ultimate objectives, gave them a sense of satisfaction and of importance which carried them beyond the more limited horizons of their daily lives. They have often told me that if their stories would help human beings anywhere, they would feel a sense of accomplishment.

In the course of our interviews I asked hundreds of questions ... Naturally my training as an anthropologist, my years of familiarity with Mexican culture, my own values, and my personality influenced the final outcome of this study. While I used a directive approach in the interviews, I encouraged a free association, and I was a good listener. I attempted to cover systematically a wide range of subjects: their earliest memories, their dreams, their hopes, their fears, joys, and sufferings; their jobs; their relationship with friends, relatives, employers; their sex life; their concepts of justice, religion and politics; their knowledge of geography and history; in short, their total view of the world. Many of my questions stimulated them to express themselves on subjects which they might otherwise never have thought of our volunteered information about. However, the answers were their own.

In preparing the interviews for publication, I have eliminated my questions and have selected, arranged, and organised their materials into coherent life-stories. If one agrees with henry james that life is all inclusion and confusion while art is all discrimination and selection, then these life- histories have something of both art and life. I believe this in no way reduces the authenticity of the data or their usefulness for science. For those of my colleagues who are interested in the raw materials, I have the taped interviews available.

The editing has been more extensive in some cases than others [...]

[...]

The translation of lower-class Mexican Spanish has presented formidable and in some ways insoluble problems, particularly in attempting to find equivalents for slang expressions, idioms, and jokes with sexual innuendo. I have tried to capture the essential meaning and flavour of the language rather than render a literal translation. Inevitably, some of the unique quality and charm of the original as well as the personal style of each individual has been lost. The English translation gives a surprisingly high level of language and the vocabulary of Mexicans, be they peasants or slumdwellers, have always impressed me. [...]

II. J.H.S.Bossard, The Large Family System: An Original Study in the Sociology of Family Behaviour (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1956)

This study is about the 'large family' as a way ofchild rearing and family living, based on the life histories of one hundred large families. It is concerned to stress (a) the importance of the large family in child development, (b) the existence of a large family system, and (c) personality in the large family. It is not a statistical analysis, but is intended as an exploratory study, and all conclusions are offered tentatively, aiming to provide insights and to suggest hypotheses for subsequent research.

Extracts from Chapter 2, Method: How the Study was Made

The first step in the present study was experimental and exploratory. It involved the use of *undesigned life history documents*. This term is used to indicate a case study which is not written to follow design. It is not written for publication, like an autobiography; nor to present a set of answers, as in response to a questionnaire; nor to follow a series of assigned topics, as is done in many literary compositions. An *undesigned life history document* is one written by a person about his experiences, recollections and thoughts, and is planned only in the sense of being confined to a given area of life. Such a record is not 'tailored' to the design of a researcher, nor is it a series of responses manipulated by his interests. It reveals the emphases of the writer, furnishing data and interpretation as selected by the contributor of the record.

In the present instance, fifteen persons, who had grown up in large families, were asked to write about their family life during days of their childhood and youth, with special reference to their own development as maturing persons. No other stipulation of topic was made, nor questions asked. All of them were persons of intelligence, and nine of them had since lived, as adults, as members of small families, thus having had experience in living in families of contrasting sizes. The life records which they contributed were of unequal length and value. Several consisted of more than forty typed pages, single spaced, and spelled out in considerable detail their early family experiences. Others were less outgoing in their recollections, confining themselves to summary statements of selected facets of their family life.

To utilise these undesigned records seemed a natural and advantageous way to begin the study and to serve as bases for its further organisation. Throughout the entire project, these undirected contributions were encouraged, along with other methods of securing information. No evaluation of 'unsolicited information', in contrast to other types of data, however, is made nor implied at any time in this volume. Any and every kind of data and source of information have their own values and limitations.

The fifteen records thus obtained were then analysed by two persons one of whom was the oldest of ten children; the other, the older of two. The result was the formulation of a series of questions and topics, which were 'tried' on twenty-five persons who had been reared in large families. The case records thus obtained were analysed again, and an outline was then constructed that has been utilised throughout the study.

This outline consists of two parts, Part one called for {*data on parents, their children, order of birth of informant, their religion, type of community in which they lived*} .... Part two consisted of topics to write about or to talk about in interviews. These {are attitudes toward the large family, general tone of family life, sibling relations, parent-child relations, other persons in the household, discipline, informant's ideal family size, etc} ...

[...]

In gathering the information, every effort was made to secure the interest, co-operation, and confidence of the informants. Particular efforts were made to emphasise the confidential nature of the material contributed. At the very beginning, each family was given a number and all information, it was explained, was recorded with the use of a system of symbols which precluded the use of names and other items of identification. Assurance was given that only one catalyst would have access to records after their recording. Informants were encouraged thus to write and to talk themselves out frankly and completely.

Relatively complete records centering around the foregoing outline were secured from at least one child in each of the hundred families included in the study. Written records centering around this outline were obtained for seventy-two families. In fourteen of these seventy-two cases, more than one member made a written contribution; in three cases, more than two members did so.

In the case of the other twenty-eight families, oral interviews only were conducted, in the course of which the general outline was followed, but the informants were encouraged to talk freely and over as wide a range as they wished. Particular emphasis was given to the last point in the outline, in which they were asked to discuss topics and points not previously covered.

In fifty-four cases, it was possible to combine both the written and oral approach. In these cases, the informant first 'wrote himself out' on the outline given to him. This was then read, after which at least one interview, and in some instances more than one interview, followed. In these cases the informants were led over their written accounts, and asked to clarify them and to supplement them.

Not all questions were answered by all of the informants, so that tabulations of answers presented subsequently will not always total to one hundred. In some cases, these omissions appear in the cases where only written contributions are available; in a few interviews, there was evidence a reluctance to answer certain questions. Since the good will and co-operation of the informant were highly valued, nothing resembling pressure was exerted in any case.

[...]

To make explorations over a six-year period into the life histories of a hundred families, including more than a thousand persons, is a unique and rewarding experience. Not only does one learn much about life, but also something about the methods of studying family life. [...]

Although the main objective in this study has been the discovery of qualitative insights, the authors have made mathematical summaries of the data in the chapters that follow. These have been made purely for their suggestive value. The limited number of cases, as well as their doubtful representativeness, preclude any general statistical significance for these summaries. Critical readers will keep this clearly in mind.

If there is one outstanding impression which this study has made upon those who have participated in it, it is an appreciation of the vast amount of investigation that is needed in an unexplored field before pertinent and promising hypotheses can be formed. The large family as a way of life and child rearing has received little attention from sociologists thus far. This is, therefore, a pioneer study in which we have sought to break new ground and open new vistas. Our efforts have been focused on the unearthing of new leads which can subsequently be utilised for the formulation of hypotheses which more comprehensive research studies may prove or disprove. Our methodology has been adjusted to this end, and it is on this basis that both our findings and methodology should be judged.

This must not be interpreted as implying a cavalier attitude toward methodological procedures currently in vogue. Once pertinent hypotheses have been formed, there remains the quantitative task of checking them. That the standardisation and manipulation of large groups of social facts call for sound scientific craftsmanship, goes without saying. One is reminded here of the distinction made by W.I.Thomas, between the life-experience document, which is not designed to prove anything but whose unique value lies in the recounting of human experience in individual terms, and the role of statistics, which is the establishment of the relative weight of suggested variables and their inter-relationships. But the human situation is truly very complex, and 'it must be obvious that very important aspects of the environment are probably not touched by these measurements, and likewise important aspects of personality make-up are not included'.[6]

Another comment concerns the use of the questionnaire type of approach. Major or even appreciable reliance upon formal questions seemed less desirable the longer any use was made of it in the present study, for it clearly tended to confine the investigation to prescribed items and forms of answer. The question-and-answer technique elicits information only on the points of inquiry. It is much like the lawyer and a witness in the courtroom. Skillful and inept counsel, by confining testimony to the answer to specific questions, often creates impressions which are contrary to the facts and the witnesses' knowledge of them. Second, since this method tends to force complex human relationships into simple and countable categories, the net result may be wholly misleading. Moreover, when they can thus be reduced, the appropriate categorical pigeonholes may not be available. Accordingly, as the present study progressed, less and less use was made of the direct questionnaire in interviewing, save for the purpose of suggesting the areas of experience to be considered, allowing the informant to follow the course of his own recollections.

Finally, the present study has reaffirmed a conviction that research methods need to be adapted to the differing abilities and attitudes of the person concerned.[7] Some people are 'ear and tongue' minded. That is, they will talk, often quite freely and frankly, concerning even the most intimate aspects of family life. They will answer questions freely and supplement them with various kinds of additional information. Mention of one subject will call forth responses on other matters mentally associated with it. In marked contrast will be any written records that can be obtained. They will talk but they won't write. This may be due to an inability in the art of written expression or an uneasiness about committing anything to a written record. 'Never put anything on paper.' This is a social as well as business principle with some people.

Experience with other informants is exactly the reverse. These people write easily, often they write well and they are quite willing to do so. Ability in the art of written expression exceeds aptitude in framing the oral word. The informant in the present study who contributed the longest and certainly one of the most revealing and helpful records of large family living is a shy, retiring person whose laconic replies to questions were given with a hesitant diffidence that was in marked contrast to the easy flow of the written record.

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[6] W.I. and Dorothy S.Thomas, *The Child in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), p.567. See also Edmund H. Volkhart. *Social Behaviour and Personality* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951), pp. 18-28

[7] For a more complete discussion of this and also of other methods of studying family life, the reader is referred to James H. Bossard and Eleanor S. Boll, *Ritual in Family Living* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), chapter X.

Fortunately, in fifty-four of the cases, it was possible to combine both the written contributions of the informants with a record of interviews. This combination seems, whenever feasible, to be most desirable, to be most desirable in studies of this kind.

[...] Here various refinements of methodology were employed, but much of the progress that resulted came in a way so aptly described by another student of a hundred families. 'My understanding,' writes Rebecca Reyher in her book on *The Fon and His Hundred Wives*, 'seemingly comes by osmosis and irrelevancy. Like a jigsaw puzzle, all the pieces are in a heap, and then suddenly they begin to fall into place, have purpose and meaning.'[8]

[...]

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[8] Rebecca Reyher, *The Fon and His Hundred Wives* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1952), p.32

III. Robert Bogdan (ed), Being Different: The Autobiography of Jane Fry (New York: John Wiley and Son, 1974)

It is interesting to note that Bogdan says that he compiled rather than wrote this autobiography, and that he did so because of his disillusionment with contemporary social science research which created and produced its own realities which it would present as that experienced by those we call subjects. Jane Fry is a transsexual, and the book is a narrative of her life as she tells it. Its aim is common in the social sciences: to provide a better understanding of society, its institutions, and those who pass through them. Bogdan's role was to collect and edit life history material, having guided the narrator to give details and elaborate areas of sociological rather than popular interest.

Extracts from **Introduction**:

Each person's life experiences are somewhat unique, and yet we all share certain experiences and developmental processes. By looking carefully at one life history, we can examine the nature of all human life, and by looking at life histories of authors who have had certain very unique experiences, we can observe very clearly the dynamics of certain processes that appear only subtly in other lives. Each life history provides a laboratory in which certain aspects of human experience can best be studied and, hopefully, illuminated.

The Story of the Book

It was the spring of 1971 that I first met Jane, the narrator of this book. She had recently been discharged from the psychiatric ward of the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital in Central City and had just joined a chapter of a homosexual liberation group which had a speaker's bureau. One of its first engagements was to address a 'Social Problems' class at a nearby college. I sat in on the class, and subsequently asked the group to speak to two of my classes. Jane was one of the members of the group, and she stood out in several ways, mostly because of her ability to conceptualise her life and present situation.[9] The following fall I asked the group to address an advanced graduate methodology course. Sometime between spring and fall I first thought of working with Jane in compiling her story, although I did not seriously pursue the idea until the following spring. During the period between conception of the idea and its pursuit, I re-read some of the early autobiographical material of the Chicago School and was further impressed by their usefulness - this fanned my enthusiasm for the project.

By late winter I was ready to seek Jane out, but I postponed contacting her for several reasons, mainly because I did not know her very well and did not know how she would react to this possible intrusion in her life. In early March I visited the Crisis Center where Jane had been doing volunteer work and inquired about her. I was surprised and shocked to be told nonchalantly that she had been involuntarily committed to Central State Mental Hospital a few days earlier.

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[9] To some readers Jane may appear extremely exceptional in these areas. While I do not wish to suggest that she is not an exceptionally talented person, she may appear exceptional because we tend to think that people in positions such as hers have only limited intellectual abilities. We must be careful not to malign others and support stereotypes about others by praising Jane. I have come to believe, through listening to people talk about their lives and by reading personal documents, that everyone has at least one good story in them - his own. This is as true of those we believe to have only the most limited literary talent as it is of everyone else. If one takes the time to establish a relationship with a persons, and encourage him to discuss his life, one can find this kind of exceptionality in anyone.

Towards the end of March I attended a meeting at the Crisis Center, and to my surprise Jane was there. I spoke to her after that meeting, mainly about her stay at Central State Hospital. We also conversed at two later meetings. In a sense, we had already established a rapport when I finally mentioned the project to her and asked if she would meet with me and discuss it. She knew that I was a college instructor, but she also knew that I was interested in the concerns of the Crisis Center, which were also of great interest to her.[10]

Our first arranged meeting was held at my office which was located in an old one-family house in a deteriorating residential setting. Other community-based researchers and practitioners worked there according to flexible schedules and with little formality. The congenial atmosphere perhaps facilitated development of the rapport Jane and I established during our talks over the next months.

At our first meeting I told Jane of my interest in working with her on he autobiography and explained that I wanted to produce a work that would make a contribution to a sociological understanding. I explained the book would be useful in giving sociologists and their students an understanding of her life and the world as she saw it. Jane was enthusiastic about working as a partner, and told me that she had thought about writing her story on several occasions but had never been able to work on it for any prolonged period of time. She had at one time started writing and had completed 15 pages but had not returned to it. She also told me that at two periods in her life she had written 'self-analysis' pieces, a few pages in length which were reflections on her experiences and feelings. She also shared with me the letters from her correspondence with two doctors; they have been used at various points in her story.

Jane's motivation for participating in the project was many-faceted. She was interested in presenting her story to others, so that they might better understand what it means to be different and to grow up in the United States. This was the same reason that had led her to accept a few speaking engagements. Another reason was that she simply wanted to write a book. We first planned to identify Jane by her real name, but as we progressed further there were legal matters to consider, as well as concerns about protecting friends, relatives and Jane from possible harm. Therefore fictitious names have been used and places have been disguised. [...]

A few weeks elapsed between our first discussion of the project and the start of our work. Most of our meetings were held during the months of April, May and June of 1972 at my office, and consisted of unstructured interviews which were tape recorded. We started with informal conversations, pursuing various topics and discussing different phases of her life as they came up. If Jane brought up topics during a taping sessions that she was unable to finish, I would mention them the next day. We did not attempt to record her life story chronologically, but skipped around from day to day. There was an advantage in this method: it allowed a relationship to develop between us so that experiences that were difficult for her to talk about were dealt with at later sessions. I replayed certain tapes and at later taping sessions asked Jane questions regarding the chronology of events, and so on. Early in the interviewing I asked her to list the main events in her life chronologically, and this listing was used as a guide in organising the material, as well as, in directing later taping sessions.

During the three-month period the material was recorded, we met from one to five times a week, and our meetings lasted from one to five hours. I did not keep an accurate count of the number of hours we spent recording our sessions; an estimate is about 100. Over 750 pages of transcribed material was the result of our effort.

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[10] The Crisis Center was a street clinic which focused on drug and psychiatric problems. It offered limited, short-term crisis services, mainly to young people in the university area.

It is difficult to describe the rapport that developed between us. Jane had spent three years in psychotherapy, prior to this project so she was accustomed to talking about herself to someone else, which probably facilitated the flow of information. However, she had been used to talking to probe her memory for answers to her difficulties, which was quite different from what we were doing. The effect of psychotherapy on what Jane focused on in talking with me, and the degree to which it affected her story, is difficult to determine. Clearly, I was not her psychotherapist; she did not relate to me as such, nor I to her.

Because of my marginal professional position in her eyes and because of my lack of affiliation with any service facility that might help her, there was no reason for Jane to distort her story in any particular direction in the hope of obtaining professional services. Our relationship was an equalitarian one in which two people had made a serious commitment to accomplish a serious objective. I had done enough participant-observation field work to be familiar with researcher-subject relations, and did not worry about developing a friendship relationship with Jane. I knew the advantages of seeing her outside the research setting, and on afternoons that we worked she shared dinner with me and my family. She came to a picnic one afternoon with us and our friends, and we celebrated the completion of the interviewing by dining out. During the interviewing Jane took me to her parents' home on a social occasion and I had an opportunity to meet and talk with them. I have visited her home since that meeting, and have met other relatives.

[...] In a sense, a relationship evolved in which we both accepted each other, and this relationship was important to the quality of the material presented here. In retrospect, research partnerships seem to be much more productive in terms of the quality of data than the master-peasant relationships that seem to be so characteristic of many researcher-subject undertakings.

I grew to trust Jane over the time we worked on the project, and I believe she learned to trust me. While I trust that she had not deceived me in purposefully misrepresenting herself, trust is not enough for 'social science'. One obligation a researcher has is to question his data, and I have made numerous checks on mine. First, in recording the interviews there was a good deal of skipping around from one time in Jane's life to another, and on many occasions Jane repeated incidents from her life two or three times, forgetting that we had previously recorded them. In reading through the material, however, I have found no contradictions. It would have been extremely difficult for her to lie so well and so consistently. Since meeting Jane, I have had opportunities to meet with other people who knew her at different times in her life. I have questioned some of them, and have received no information that substantively contradicts what Jane has told me. During the interviews Jane showed me documents that support parts of her story. I have questioned a Navy officer extensively about various aspects of the Navy and am convinced that someone must have lived the experience Jane did in order to have the knowledge of the Navy she has. This is also true of a wide variety of other experiences, including those involving psychiatric facilities, beauty school, door-to-door selling and mechanics. I have visited many of the places Jane mentions in her story, and her descriptions and my observations clearly match. The most elaborate check of the accuracy of the 'facts' as she related them was in my reading of Jane's medical records after having completed the interviewing.

How the material in this volume came to be arranged in this order is my own story. After the many pages of transcript had been typed, I read all the material once and then went through it all again, coding it for chronological order. After sorting out this information, I organised the chapters one at a time. With minor exceptions I kept the work in Jane's words, and attempted to convey the meaning she had intended. I eliminated materials that did not seem central to sociological concerns. For example, originally, there was much more detailed information about Jane's work experiences after leaving the Navy than that which appears in the book. And in the raw data much of the material was repetitious. In editing I have combined this material in order to provide the fullest description possible. In order to make the material more readable, I have edited some of the material for wordiness and tense, but by and large the work represents Jane's story as it was told to me.

IV. Raymond E. Leonard, Ten Years On: A Retrospective Look at Open University 'A' Students Attached to a Local Study Centre (MA Dissertation, University of Hull, 1980)

Shortly after the Open University had taken its first entry of students ('A' Year students), its own research team headed by Naomi MacIntosh began an analysis of these first year applicants. Based on a sample of nearly 5,000, a large survey using a postal questionnaire was carried out, and the results published in A Degree of Difference. *In his research, Leonard decided to compare the findings of MacIntosh* et. al. *with an in-depth study, using the life history method, of just thirteen 'A' students, who represented just under half of those who were based at one part particular Study Centre in its first year of operation, and hence drawn from the same population as the sample used by MacIntosh, but ten years on.*

Extracts from Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY: The Biographical Approach

The subjects of this study are mature members of society, thus they possess a wide variety of statuses and careers: the only thing they have in common is that they were students of the Open University during its first year of operation. [...]

[...] Those who were willing to participate were asked to write a short life history which would include their background, type of education and age at leaving school, details of any part-time education, occupational career, marital status, any changes in status since graduating - both occupational and personal, opinions of the Open University methods of teaching and organisation, and whether they had any plans to embark upon any further course of study.

The response was varied as some of the respondents answered almost immediately and at considerable length, whilst repeated requests were necessary to stimulate any action from the remainder. Thirteen biographies were eventually obtained together with an unscripted tape of thirty-five minutes' duration and containing a mass of detail from another student. Edited versions are contained in an Appendix. Three other students agreed to discuss their Open University experiences but did not provide any written data and another who had been one of the first to agree later withdrew his support.

How the respondents approached the task of writing the biography was left entirely to them, they were told in rather wide terms what was being attempted and that the information, listed above, would enable some generalisations to be drawn as to the typicality of the local study group in the first year of the Open University.

Considerations of the Methodology

When attempting to carry out any research involving the use of data derived from biographical material one is immediately faced with the problem of how the anonymity of the respondents can be preserved. This was discussed with all respondents at the first meeting and it was suggested that fictitious names could be used: the response to this suggestion was most surprising - the majority of the respondents did not even wish to hide behind the cloak of anonymity. Several of the participants seemed to be genuinely pleased that someone was sufficiently interested in their academic endeavours to ask them to take part in a study and enclosed a covering note with their biography which included remarks such as: 'Hope this is what you want, let me know if I can help in any other way', or 'Do what you want with this, don't hesitate to ring if you need further information', or 'It's much longer than I thought it would be. Please do what you like with it'.

Regarding the use of their own names, most of the respondents who had graduated were more than willing for their names to be appended, but two who did not complete their studies to degree level asked that their names should be withheld. In accord with standard research procedures, actual names are not used in this study, but one is still faced with an ethical dilemma concerning editing. Repetitions and irrelevancies have been omitted from the data reproduced in the Appendix but respondents could be identified by means of their occupational career. Unless much of what is considered to be of value is omitted, this is an unavoidable risk that one must take, a risk that can be justified on the grounds that the respondents gave their permission for their biographies to be included in this study, and furthermore, since this work is not to be published, the chances of such identification are very remote.

In addition to the problems of anonymity and ethical considerations, one is also faced with the problem of actually getting the subjects to produce the finished article. An approach was made to those known personally at the beginning of March, and as soon as a new name was added to the list, which was assembled by those taking part, contact was made personally or by telephone, and letters were sent to those known to have left the district. Thus, by the middle of March all the subjects had been asked for a life history, and told that they would be required in about one month's time. As stated above, the response varied enormously - three were received within tend days, the rest came in spasmodically after reminders. The last one was actually written in my presence when I made my fourth visit during the first week of July.

Apart from time and effort involved in obtaining the biographies, there is the question of how much influence repeated requests for a piece of written work, which after all, is done as a favour for the researcher, affects the quality of the finished article. It is significant that those who responded most quickly produced the lengthiest biographies and were least well-known, with one exception, by the researcher. Conversely, the shortest written submission was made by a person who needed the most reminders and has been known for many years, but he made a lengthy journey the evening before going on holiday to deliver his work as he thought it might be required before his return.

Having collected the biographies one is then faced with the problem of deciding how best to organise the data - the actual quality and literary style varied enormously, and for this exercise it is possible to extract numerical data so that quantitative analyses can be made and also collate subjective experience when qualitative assessment is called for.

As this is in effect a comparative study, at a micro level, no claim can be made that it is 'scientific'. I am merely trying to ascertain to what extent generalisations made by MacIntosh et. al.[11] are applicable to a small study group. The fact that I am in a position to carry out further enquiries by means of unstructured interviews or telephone conversations should enable me to probe to a greater depth than was possible by reliance on a single, albeit lengthy questionnaire.

The use of multiple biographies to obtain data for this study was forced upon me as the major information source proved inaccessible. This may prove to be fortuitous as the use of this method may reveal a greater depth of understanding of subjective experiences and at the same time yield quantitative data, a combination which would be difficult to obtain by any other method of investigation.

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[11] N.E.MacIntosh, with J. Calder and B. Swift, *A Degree of Difference* (Guildford: Society for Research into Higher Education, University of Surrey, 1976)

V. Paul F. Armstrong, Taking Knowledge: A Sociological Approach to the Study of Meditation and the Divine Light Mission (Ph.D Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Essex, 1977)

The fieldwork for this study was carried out between 1974 and 1976. In the attempt to carry out a sociological study of meditation, several research method were employed, including a literature review, an analysis of newspaper reports, as well as extensive use of participant observation, and in-depth interviews, which were intended to obtain or supplement the life histories of a few members of the particular group under study. The combination of these techniques - the biographical approach - had the strength of providing 'intuitive understanding' of the phenomenon of meditation, the 'inside story'.

Extracts from Appendix I: Making Sense of Meditation: Some Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

The collection of edited multiple biographies is the approach employed in this study. In all thirteen written biographies were obtained, mainly from subjects already well-known to the researcher. Only two were asked for after just one meeting; the other subjects who supplied biographies had been known to the researcher for periods ranging from six months to thirteen years. Each subject was personally asked for his biography, as this provided an opportunity to stress what was required. Where the subjects began their written biographies, what they included and so on, was left entirely to them, although they were supplied with a fairly vague outline, which moreorless told them to begin at the beginning and include anything they deemed to be relevant. But, in fact, this deliberate vagueness and unstructuredness proved to be a handicap in some instances, as some subjects did not know where to begin or what to include or how much detail to go into. Consequently, there was a range of responses in terms of length, from four to fourteen sides. Some premies {members of the Divine Light Mission} began their stories immediately prior to taking Knowledge {undergoing the initiation ceremony for membership}, whilst others went right back to their early childhood. Some biographies were purely factual, whereas others included interpretative comments.

From these written biographies, from two years' participant observation and from prior acquaintance of one group of these premies, the main themes were abstracted, and using these themes as a guideline, another thirteen premies were interviewed. The first question in each of these interviews was always, 'Can you tell me about your life before Knowledge, and how you came to take it?' This gave the interviewees the opportunity to present an off-the-cuff biographical account of their life. This proved, not surprisingly, rather more unsatisfactory then the written biographies, because of the unorganised, repetitive and rambling nature of the 'biologues' (oral biographies). The interviewees, because they had not in every case, been forewarned of this question were given insufficient time to organise their account, and they had to rely on whatever came to mind. This comment was typical: 'It's difficult to know where to start' [Martin]. And the answers were often interspersed or sometimes ended with comments like: 'That doesn't sound very sort of together, I can't really, you know ... maybe if you ask me questions, that's easier. It's very hard to ...' [Shaun]. These tape-recorded biographies were typically unorganised and non-sequential, littered with 'Oh, and I remember when ...' as one memory triggered off another. The guideline derived from the written biographies proved invaluable for going over the main themes, which, in most cases, gave the interviews an orderly appearance.

Obviously, then, the written autobiography is the preferred form, but this has the very real problem of actually getting subject to do this, because very few of them were used to writing at length since they had left school several years' previous. When the subjects were first asked for their biographies (June) they were told that they were required in about one month's time. The first one was received within a few days, but no more were delivered until late September, and most, after fairly insistent pressure, were written in October and November, with a couple delayed until December. Since the follow-up interview could not be carried out until the person's biography had been received, this made rather hard work of data collection, especially as the subjects needed the occasional reminder.

In fact, having to keep asking posed another kind of methodological issue, since the subjects were really doing the researcher a 'favour', and not for their own benefit, although they did see it as a form of satsang {spiritual discourse}. A few explicitly said that they were pleased to have been given the opportunity to sit down and think back over their lives, while one or two were even flattered to have been asked: 'Why do you want my life story? I'm nothing special, nothing amazing's happened to me' [Jane]. This is probably tied in with the commonsense notion of biography, where the central figure tends to be portrayed in heroic terms, in dramatic circumstances, and it is believed that only people with that kind of background are 'interesting' enough to have their biographies written, or who would want to write about their autobiography. Yet, as the biographies of my subjects demonstrate, every person's biography is potentially interesting, not only in cases where the subject lives areas of life never experienced by the reader, but in all cases because of their uniqueness and individuality. These biographies are not without 'drama', as some premies had attempted suicide, had 'bad' drug experiences, and so on.

Having collected a mass of biographical data, the problem then is how to organise it. If one employs the single complete biography, then the most obvious framework is that of natural or temporal sequence, providing a description of a person's life from then until now. This could be used too for multiple biographies, organised on the basis of one biography per chapter. But in doing so, what is lost are the historical and structural aspects, especially as most of the biographies overlap with at least one other. So the multiple biographies need bringing together, but this is far from easy as there is no typical career pattern of the premie, that each individual goes through on his way to Knowledge. However, as we saw in Part II, the subjects themselves did have an image of the typical stages of coming to be followers of Guru Maharaj Ji {the leader of the Divine Light Mission} ... it is possible to use the dominant themes and show how some people pass through this stage or that, and why others do not, as I did in Part II of this thesis.

This requires a certain amount of editing. According to Denzin, the key feature of edited life histories is

> the continual interspersing of comments, explanations by someone other than the focal subject. For purpose of theory construction and hypothesis testing, some degree of editing and interspersion of observer comments must be present. Without such intrusion, the life history must stand as its own sociological document.[12]

Initially, it was envisaged that the datum in this thesis would 'speak for itself'. However, it was realised that even from the theoretical perspective that characterises this research, some analysis is essential if the end product is to be at all sociological rather than mere journalism, or story-telling ... Although analytic comments are kept to a minimum in Part II of the thesis, the sociologist inevitably imposes himself on the collection of biographical data:

> The sociologist deliberately monitors the statements of his subject, selects certain materials for amplification, deletes others and so places his stamp on his final product.[13]

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[12] Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act in Sociology* (London: Butterworths, 1971); p. 223

[13] ibid; p. 226

Denzin goes on to add that, in a sense, all biographies bear the imprint of the sociological researcher, since the subject probably would not have written his life history without prodding from the researcher, which is certainly true in this case. Besides, while letting the datum 'speak for itself' might intuitively make sense to me, because of my involvement with the subjects, my participant observation, and my knowledge of their lives prior to the research, I am probably in a privileged position to be able to make sense of the datum which may not make sense to anyone else, if it was left to speak for itself. In any event, the biographies need to be situated in the structural and cultural backgrounds, which is the task of the researcher, because of his privileged knowledge.

These difficulties appear to stem from using multiple biographies as opposed to the single biography. Using multiple biographies, the problems of collection, organisation and presentation are much more complex than if one intensively studied just one person. But one of the problems of employing the single, intensive biography ... is the question of representativeness. [...] A standard objection to the life history method is this question of representativeness - how representative is the sample of the population from which it is drawn? ... In using multiple biographies, this is not so much of a problem since one can present a range of idiosyncratic experiences from which one can generalise by showing some similarities of all the biographies. Only through the collection of multiple biographies of people of a kind will dominant themes begin to emerge, from which one can, if required, construct a hypothetical life career of whatever category of person or institution one is studying.

Another and obvious methodological problem in doing biographical work is how do we know what the subjects tell us in their biographies is the truth? This is the problem of validity. Of course, we do not know and cannot know that the biographee is telling the 'truth'; that is, telling us about his past as it actually happened, rather than as he now interprets it as having happened. Indeed, it is probably safe enough to assume that the respondent is not telling us what actually happened, but necessarily another version of reality. There is obviously some kind of retrospective reinterpretation going on, not only brought about by the limitations of memory and recall, but due to the development of a new *weltanschauung*, which affects not only the perception of the current situation, but also the interpretation of past events.

In employing the biographical approach, then, we may expect that the constructed life histories will not truly reflect what actually happened, or even, what a person actually thought was happening. On biography, Peter Berger writes:

> The common-sense view would have it that we live through a certain sequence of events, some more and some less important, the sum of which is our biography. To compile a biography, then, is to record these events in chronological order or in order of their importance. But even a purely chronological record raises the problem of just what events should be included, since obviously not everything the subject of the record ever did could be covered. In other words, even a purely chronological record forces one to raise questions concerning the relative importance of certain events.[14]

Further,

> it would seem ... that the course of events that constitute one's life can be subjected to alternative interpretations. Nor can this be done only by the outside observer, so that after we're dead rival biographiers may quarrel over the real significance of this or that thing we have done or said. We ourselves go on interpreting and reinterpreting our own life. As Henri Bergson has shown, memory itself is a reiterated act of interpretation. As we remember the past, we reconstruct it in accordance with our present ideas of what is important or not. This is what the psychologists call 'selective perception', except that they usually apply this concept to the present. This means that in any situation, with its near

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[14] Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966); p.68

> infinite number of things that could be noticed, we notice only those things that are important for our immediate purposes. The rest we ignore.[15]

The implication of this that the past is not

> fixed, immutable, invariable, as against the ever-changing flux of the present. On the contrary, at least within our own consciousness, the past is malleable and flexible, constantly changing as our recollection reinterprets and re-explains what has happened. Thus we have as many lives as we have points of view. We keep reinterpreting our biography very much as the Stalinists kept rewriting the Soviet Encyclopeadia, calling forth some events into decisive importance as others were banished to ignominious oblivion.[16]

The problems this fact raises for the biographical approach are apparent: to make sense of a person's current situation, one needs to understand a person's past, but to understand a person's past one needs to make sense of his current situation. Related specifically to this thesis, the point is that in order to understand why a person comes to take Knowledge to take into account his past experiences. However, those past experiences will be recalled in such a way as to 'explain' the fact that this person has taken that Knowledge. Thus, premies suggest that they took Knowledge because of their dismal past, but, in fact, it may be that the 'dismal past' is created as a justification for taking Knowledge. Rather than being a kind of 'vicious circle' as this suggests, this highlights the fact that the relationship between a person's present and past is symbiotic, and that is why we need to be aware of the ways in which biographies may possibly be misleading when looking at a person's past.

The limitations of memory and recall are common to most research procedures that ask questions about past events. It is particularly relevant to practitioners of 'oral history', where all information is retrospective over an unusually long time span compared with other research techniques, and since this material has not been written down, there is a peculiar concern with the problems of memory and recall.[17] Obviously we cannot and do not remember everything that happens and so there is a selective perception process going on, which leads to a certain amount of discarding. Hunter[18] shows that it is the initial discarding or immediate forgetting that is the most dramatic and violent, and thus length of time is not so significant a variable in memory as one might imagine.

The question of central interest, of course, is, are the events that a person recalls after a period of time significant for that person, as having some kind of special meaning? It is on this assumption that I interpreted the written biographies, where subjects were given time to think about what and what not to include. One of the subjects said about writing his biography:

> *I didn't know what was important and what wasn't important, so I thought I had to write everything I could remember. But I don't know if they're important or not, because I don't know what is important. I mean, because you're a premie it doesn't mean you've got a good memory.* [Michael]

I decided, perhaps rather naively, that anything included by the biographee may be seen as significant. But at the same time I was aware that some things may have deliberately been omitted from the life history that were of equal, if not of more importance than what was included. Thus, the follow-up interview functioned not only to check facts included in the biographies, but also to seek out areas that may have been omitted, and to find out why such areas were excluded.

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[15] ibid; pp. 70-71

[16] ibid; p. 71

[17] See Paul Thompson, 'Problems of method in oral history' *Oral History*, vol. 4, 1974; pp. 1-47

[18] Ian Hunter, *Memory* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964)

Rather than go into a general discussion of problems of memory and recall, I will discuss the peculiar relevance of retrospective reinterpretation for this research. The first problem concerning memory is raised by the fact that my subjects have all taken mind-altering drugs and are meditators. The implication is that in some way or other the psychological functions of memory and recall are likely to have been affected by altered states of consciousness ...

[...]

... since all my subjects are involved in bringing about altered states of consciousness, whether drug- or mystically-induced, we can expect that recall of past autobiographical details will be somewhat affected.

Contributing to the difficulties is the subjects' attitude to the past. The philosophy to which most meditators subscribe is 'Be-Here-Now'. The ability to live entirely in the present, without paying heed to the immediate past or future is precisely one of the goals of meditation, including Divine Light. This follows the conception of reality as 'here and now'. Consequently, I found comments such as:

> *I don't remember a great deal about my early life (i.e. prior to the age of about 15/16) and I don't particularly want to.* [Michael]
>
> *I find that meditation blots out previous bad times so you do not live with by-gone fears. This is very natural. So many people are hung up on what happened to them on New Year's Eve 1965, or something.* [Jane]
>
> *Knowledge has probably changed the way how I understand how I was before. It has affected my memory of the state I was actually in when I described the state I was in before I took Knowledge, it is something in the past. It is no longer something that I relive vividly, because it seems that the Knowledge has taken me a long way since then, although sometimes I look at it and I think I've hardly changed at all, but I think it's like through practising Knowledge, I am a different person, my world is different, and because Knowledge is such that you don't need to live on your memories, your memories aren't so important, you know, I don't need to remember the good times in the past, you know. I've kind of tended to forget sort of the real life in which I used to live before, and it requires some exercise to bring it all up again. I don't think, though, that I've really given a distorted picture.* [Richard]

As well as demonstrating the being-here-now attitude, this premie also brings out another interesting issue that arises because ... some kind of conversion process is at work. The problem is recognised by Stimson:

> The problem with any story is that it must appear rational to the audience ... the life history must fit with the present situation. This may be done by selecting items from the past which are in line with the present, and so the life course is shown as *consistent*; alternatively, the discrepancy between the past and the present can be magnified in order to show the *disjunction* between past and present. The past is either incorporated or written off. Such consistency or disjunction maintains the rationality of the teller ...[19]

In cases of conversion, therefore, there is a disjunction between the life before conversion and life after. Indeed, one premie was so aware of this disjunction that he chose to write his biography in the third-person. In the follow-up interview he was asked why he had done this, and he replied:

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[19] Gerry Stimson, 'Biography and Retrospect: Some Problems in the Study of Life History', paper delivered at the British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, Manchester, April 1976; p.9

> *Really a life history doesn't seem terribly real, you know, I mean, me, ten years ago doesn't seem quite the same as me now, so I suppose that's why I wrote it in the third person.* [Graham]

Basically what all this comes down to, then, is that not only should we be aware of the possibility of retrospective reinterpretation, but we should expect it:

> There are some cases, however, where the re-interpretation of the past is part of a deliberate, fully conscious and intellectually integrated activity. This happens when there interpretation of one's biography is one aspect of conversion to a new religious or ideological *Weltanschauung*, that is, a universal meaning system *within which* one's biography can be located. Thus the convert to a religious faith can now understand his entire previous life as a providential movement towards the moment when the mist is lifted from before his eyes ... Inevitably the period coming before the event now designated as decisive is interpreted as a preparation ... In other words, conversion is an act in which *the past* is dramatically transformed.[20]

There are a number of issues introduced here that need to be taken up. Firstly, there is the suggestion that a person's biography has to be consistent with his current situation. This may also be achieved, though, by stressing the disjunction between the past and the present in cases of conversion. This is a problem of 'biographical legitimation':

> When a person changes realities he acquires a problem in biographical legitimation. His dilemma is simple: in his old reality many of his actions were bad; according to his new reality, perhaps his entire life style was bad. The dilemma is actually more complex if he changes within the same symbolic universe from sub-reality to another; he cannot totally reject his past and he must selectively re-interpret it, give more emphasis to some events and less to others. When he converts from one reality to another, he can reject his entire past as being inspired by ignorance of the truth, or by the evil system. If the truth could be found between realities, I suspect that not every religious convert led such a life of sin before he found the truth, and many hip people probably enjoyed some aspects of the system.[21]

The second issue is suggested here, that converts in some way paint their past much blacker than it actually was, emphasising the bad times, overlooking the good. The descriptions that my subjects provided ... paint a very dismal picture of their lives before coming to take the Knowledge. ...

Closely associated with this is the point that a person retrospectively interprets his life as leading up to the point he is now. That is, with hindsight, a person can impute significance and meanings to events, decisions, people and so on, in his life that he can now see were important steps on the path. Hence, we saw references made to 'coincidences', which are only seen as coincidental retrospectively. ...

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[20] Peter Berger, op.cit; pp. 75-76

[21] H. Taylor Buckner, *Deviance, Reality and Social Change* (New York: Random House, 1971); pp. 376-377

> *Well, I didn't know I was looking for Knowledge until I found it.* [Jane]
>
> *It's funny because when you think back on it, you think in psychological terms, you know, how one event in your life time made you sort of more open to this sort of particular thing, and you don't really know if it happened like that.* [Martin]
>
> *I think, well in a way you can look back and say everything, you know, the whole way my life has gone from then 'til now, from when I was born, led up to me taking Knowledge. That's one way of looking at it.* [Richard]
>
> *It was just as if certain key people in my life received Knowledge, and it was just kind of set up for me, and that's the way it seemed to be with a lot of people who receive Knowledge. When you receive Knowledge, you look back at all the things you've done, and it seems very much as if it was all set up just you. The amazing thing is that everybody feels the same way.* [Don]

There are many clues that this retrospective reinterpretation is taking place in the compilation of biographies. In addition to coincidences, there are phrases such as 'as I see it now', 'looking back I realised', and so on, which do suggest a reinterpretation of the past. ...

The final consideration is the role of audiences. As well as being misleading due to the need for consistency and as a consequence of conversion, the influence of the audience may be very important in the construction of biography, especially when deciding what to include and what to omit. It is a generally accepted belief that an author often writes with a specific audience in mind, and

> When we read autobiography ... we are always aware that the author is telling us only part of the story, that he has selected his material so as to present us with a picture of himself he would prefer us to have and that he may have ignored would be trivial or distasteful to him, though of great interest to us.[22]

... the subject of biographical research may relate facts that make his life history appear consistent, rational and acceptable. This may well involve some kind of perception of the aims of the research on the part of the subject. An example of how the subject's perception of the research and the researcher is a potential source of distortion is as follows: in his biography, Alan suggests that in the process of coming to Knowledge, particularly in listening to satsang that 'brainwashing' and self-hypnosis may enter into it. When questioned about this in the follow-up interview he said:

> *I mean this is the kind of stuff, I mean, sometimes when I'm speaking to people about Knowledge, I mean, I can't deny the experience I've had, you know, and I know that, you know, there's something amazing there. I mean, but sometimes you feel very guarded, or you feel you've got to water it down for somebody and that's probably what I did for you. Do you know what I mean? It's like sometimes we hold a programme {meeting} and we, like in this university, we hire a room and we say, we're the Divine Light Society, I mean, you have to.* [Alan]

So, it appears it is as Stimson points out[23], that when a life history is told, its content is designed with a particular audience in mind, and in reading biographies one should also be aware - along with all the other possible sources of distortion - that because the researcher is an outsider, their accounts may be 'watered down' versions of what actually happened, designed to fit in with the subject's perception of the aims of the research and the researcher. Related to this is another problem, perhaps peculiar to this research. One common denominator of all the written biographies I collected was their apparent fluidity and sophistication. This may well be due to the fact that premies rehearse their biographies virtually every time they give satsang. That is, their biographies have been told and retold, so that eventually the stories take on a 'reality' independent of what 'actually' happened; in this way any 'myths' become so well entrenched into the biographies that are now seen as 'real'. Thus biographies of premies are automatic and ideological revisions of the past, which may never have had a 'reality' in actual fact.

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[22] Howard Becker, 'Introduction' to Clifford R.Shaw, *The Jack Roller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); p. vi

[23] Gerry Stimson, op.cit; p. 8

Chapter Five SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the introduction to this paper, it was stated that the life history method has sound theoretical bases, and it is the aim of this chapter to briefly explore these theoretical roots, which - as we have previously stated - are oriented towards but not solely confined to that perspective within social theory known as 'symbolic interactionism'. This chapter will investigate this particular perspective, and conclude with an argument for the extension of the method to other perspectives with which it is consistent, primarily of a Marxist or *critical* nature.

The interactionist orientation of the life history method is most clearly presented in the work of the Essex research team on sexuality, led by Ken Plummer.[1] These researchers favoured the collection of 'qualitatively rich material rather than valid statistical data', because the latter is sparse and tends to be superficial in character, as far as their research is concerned. Here is a brief statement of why an interactionist perspective making use of the life history method is considered valuable, in spite of apparent difficulties:

> One of the most interesting aspects of this orientation is that it encourages questions which allow a focus upon the free floating ambiguity and flux of most people's lives - a problem that is ignored by many other theories. The trouble is with this use of theory as an orientation to the life history is that it can, of course, force the data. It can do this in a very obvious way, by restricting issues of interest and only allowing the subject to talk about areas which fit the theory under consideration. Interactionism, however, poses a more subtle problem. Generally, a key debate in life history construction concerns whether the questions are focussed and selective or open and permitting the subject to talk freely of his or her own life. Interactionism in the main would favour the latter strategy since it is concerned with capturing the ebb and flow and ambiguity of any one individual's life. A central theoretical assumption of most interactionist writing is that the personal life is nowhere near as linear or as clear as many social science accounts render it. It therefore, theoretically, leads one to seek out the diversity, ambiguity, negotiation and emergence in the construction of an individual's life. The trouble, of course, with this view is that it might encourage the researcher to seek ambiguity, flux, contradictions and diversity where there are none. The very process of allowing a subject to ramble on about his or her own life will confirm the tenets of interactionist theory about the rambling and negotiable aspects of life.
>
> In general, it would seem there is no way round this problem. Either one has a rigidly tight questionnaire schedule which focuses upon pre-selected issues - in which case the role of the subject will become much clearer than it possibly is; or following interactionism, one allows the subjects to talk freely over a long period of time and to display the diversity and flux of their lives - but in this case one is only confirming the principles of interactionism through the style of questionning adopted.[2]

In an earlier book[3], Plummer explicitly adopts the symbolic interactionist perspective, commenting upon its application to the study of sexuality and sexual deviance, before developing an interactionist theory of sexual differentiation. On interactionism, Plummer writes:

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[1] See, for example, Ken Plummer (ed), *The Making of the Modern Homosexual* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Problems and Literature of a Humanistic Method* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983); and Annabel Faraday and Ken Plummer, 'Doing Life Histories' *Sociological Review*, vol. 27, no. 4, 1979; pp. 773-792

[2] Annabel Faraday and Ken Plummer, op.cit; pp. 783-784

[3] Ken Plummer, *Sexual Stigma* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975)

> Unnamed, unsystematised and unpublicised during its formative years at Chicago during the first decades of the century, symbolic interactionism has become one of the dominant strands in sociological work ... During the early years it emerged through both the pragmatic philosophising of Dewey and Mead and the ethnographic fieldwork into the problems of the city by Park, Burgess and Faris among others.[4]

It is worthwhile pausing at this point to recall that the life history method had its early development in Chicago at approximately the same time that interactionism was being given its initial impetus, and this is no accident. Blumer - a product of the Chicago School - has, according to Plummer, captured the mood of symbolic interactionism in three basic postulates:

> i. 'human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings that things have for them';
>
> ii. 'the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows'; and
>
> iii. 'these meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process by the person in dealing with things he encounters.'[5]

Plummer continues:

> Locked within these three postulates, I have detected three foci of interactionism ...These suggest the world may be seen as a subjective reality, as a process and as interactive. The first directs the student to study the 'inner' side of life, to look at meanings and to analyse the ways in which the world is socially constructed. The second directs him to study the emergent and constantly changing nature of social life. While the third suggests that the individual is best constantly studied in conjunction with some significant others, or in collective action.[6]

These three aspects of symbolic interactionism are, of course, the very ones for which the life history method is particularly suited, as previously discussed.

Grown out of interactionism is another perspective which is also used and discussed by Plummer in *Sexual Stigma* - 'labelling'. Originally developed in terms of making sense of deviant behaviour, it refers to a process whereby individuals and groups classify and categorise social behaviour and other individuals in daily interaction. The general idea is that once it is agreed that a person is 'dim', 'bright', a 'troublemaker' or a 'homosexual', we tend to react towards that person *as if* he or she was, regardless of whether we are right or wrong. Eventually - according to the theory - individuals come to accept the label as part of their self identity and behave accordingly. So the term has come to designate a process whereby the behaviour of a person is shaped by the preconceived notions (stereotypes) or expectations held by others. Through the life history method, this labelling process is revealed and exposed to analysis.

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[4] ibid; p.10

[5] Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969); p.2

[6] Ken Plummer, 1975, op.cit; p. 11

In his subsequent research, with the Essex team, Plummer makes it clear that they are working within this symbolic interactionist and labelling perspective. In their work, interactionism is primarily concerned with the ways in which one's view of self is greatly influenced by group membership and social interaction, and the ways in which people negotiate 'meaning' in their everyday lives or biographies. Given their declared interactionist perspective, they recognise that most of their concerns such as self, identity, meaning, negotiation and ambiguity are those traditional to the perspective. Here we will take two of these concerns to look at more closely. First, relevant to both interactionism and labelling is the concept of 'career' - discussed earlier when it was rejected as a synonym for 'biography', but valuable in that it draws attention to the processual nature of people's lives. The notion of 'career' is prominent in *Sexual Stigma* where Plummer suggests four key stages in the development of homosexual 'careers': sensitisation, signification, subculturalisation, and stabilisation.[7]

Secondly, within this interactionist framework, there is a concern for subjects' 'vocabulary of motive'. The main theoretical roots of this lie in the work of, initially, C. Wright Mills who saw motives as typical vocabularies having ascertainable functions in delimited societal situations, rather than psychological 'mainsprings' of action. Individuals vocalise and impute these motives both to themselves and to others. rather than fixed elements in an individual, motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds. This imputation and avowal of motives by social actors turns out to be the phenomenon to be explained, not the behaviour itself. The assumption is that we learn the appropriate motives to be used in various situations. What these appropriate motives are, and how they change from one situation to another become the topic of analysis. Motives are seen as symbolic accounts, and even in the most unstructured situations, it is the shared meanings which ultimately eliminate the uncertainty that arises from the mutual attribution of motives. It is these shared meanings that are of central interest, and hence the main focus lies in the following statement:

> The differing reasons men give for their actions are not themselves without reasons.[8]

According to Scott and Lyman, who were to give this approach its greatest subsequent development, an account is to be seen as '... a statement made by a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behaviour'.[9]

But there is no reason why this approach should be reserved for the study of 'deviant' activities. We can ask individuals to 'account' for their attendance at adult education classes, or for deciding to go to university, or whatever forms of behaviour one is interested in researching. Even routine, commonsense behaviour can be called into question. We need not reserve the study of ascribed or imputed motives for those instances where there has been a breach of conventional expectations. Scott and Lyman go on to make a distinction between 'excuses' and 'justifications'. The latter are seen as accounts accepting responsibility but denying the pejorative quality associated with the act (particularly if it is labelled 'deviant'), whereas the former are accounts which appear to admit to the wrongness of the act, but deny full responsibility. Excuses, then, are socially approved vocabularies for mitigating or relieving responsibility when conduct is called into question. Justifications, like excuses, are also socially approved vocabularies, but these serve to neutralise an act or its consequences when one or both are questioned. The distinction has been applied to sexual behaviour by Laurie Taylor and he comments:

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[7] ibid; ch. 7

[8] C. Wright Mills, 'Situated actions and vocabularies of motive' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 5, 1940; p. 904

[9] Marvin B. Scott and Stanford M. Lyman, 'Accounts' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1968; p. 46

> The distinction they make between excuses and justifications is not in terms of their relationships to action; they do not, for example, argue that excuses are constructed after the action and therefore have no causal efficacy whereas justifications may enjoy causal significance by virtue of their invocation at the initiation or during the course of the action. Instead the concepts are distinguished in terms of a qualitative dimension. Whilst excuses merely neutralise an act when it is called into question, justifications 'assert its positive value in the face of a claim to the contrary'.[10]

Of course, when talking about motivational accounts we cannot gain entry into the minds of people to see what is taking place as they formulate their behaviour - we can only make inferences. As Blum and McHugh have pointed out, motives provide for such inferences; that is, motives can be seen as socially organised for the purpose of making sense of the actions of others by ascribing particular orientations to them:

> To provide a motive then, is to formulate a situation in such a way as to ascribe a motive to an actor as part of his commonsense knowledge, a motive to which he was orientated in producing the action. Thus to give a motive is not to locate a cause of the action, but is for some observer to assert how a behaviour is socially intelligible by ascribing a socially available actor's orientation.[11]

The significance of this discussion lies in its revelation as a myth the commonly accepted atheoretical bias of the life history method. However,

> It is clear that the life history technique does not approach theory in any grand or formal way. Nevertheless ... there is no intrinsic disconnection of the life history from theoretical work. It is clearly not very good at testing or validating existing theory, though it might be useful in finding a falsificatory case. It is quite good when combined with a general orientation in theory which enables one to see how the theory might make sense of that field as a whole, but in no conclusive way.[12]

Before we proceed to see whether this applies to other sociological perspectives, there is one further point that needs some expansion. This is raised when Faraday and Plummer write:

> In line with the broad tradition of *verstehen* sociology, the life history technique documents the inner experiences of individuals, how they interpret, understand and define the world around them ... the focus of life history is paramountly concerned with the subjective

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[10] Laurie Taylor, 'The significance and interpretation of replies to motivational questions: the case of sex offenders' *Sociology*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1972; p. 28

[11] Alan F. Blum and Peter McHugh, 'The social ascription of motives' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 36, 1971; p.100

[12] Annabel Faraday and Ken Plummer, op.cit; p. 785

> meanings of individuals. Most notably it comes to lay bare the 'world taken-for-granted' of people - their assumptions and what it is they find problematic about life and their lives in particular.[13]

In my own research on meditation and the Divine Light Mission (see previous chapter), I was attempting to explore the 'inside story' of meditation as told by the meditators themselves, by using a version of verstehen, fairly close to that employed by Plummer *et. al.* but perhaps rather more phenomenological than symbolic interactionist. There are several versions of verstehen, and the one that I found, at that time, most satisfactory was that characterised by the effort to 'feel oneself into' an activity, putting oneself into the place of the subject. This is a kind of psychological empathy, a method that most sharply distinguishes the 'inner' investigation of the world of human beings from the merely external investigation of the world of nature. Max Weber recognised that some such intuitive method of research was unavoidable if the study of human behaviour was not to be limited to mere observation and counting. But Weber was by no means the only social theorist to recognise the importance of the scientist entering the lives of the people being studied to seek personal understanding of their position. However, within sociology there have been relatively few writers who have explicitly recognised the place of intuitive thought or knowledge in their intellectual enterprise, one of whom was Bruyn. By intuitive knowledge. Bruyn meant

> that knowledge which is derived from the feelings, sentiments, and the manifest human spirit which has acquired some measure of independence from the senses and the logical powers of man. As we conceive it, intuition is the capacity to apprehend personal meanings which inhere in a social context. It is a human capacity, which, like logic or sense, can be disciplined, and a set of procedures may be developed around it for purposes of gaining knowledgeable access to this portion of man's nature. This is the kind of knowledge which social researchers must understand, for it is man's feeling as well as his reason that causes him to join a radical political movement, becomes a criminal, or more commonly, to get married, raise a family ...[14]

As this last comment suggests, although much of the research done from this perspective and employing this qualitative methodology has been carried out in the sphere of deviant behaviour, there is potential for its application to broader areas of social and educational life. One of the major criticisms of interactionist perspective is that it has tended to focus on rather 'trivial' and 'eccentric' areas of social life, at the 'micro' level, tending to ignore major social issues. This was characteristic of the interactionist perspective in the sociology of deviance that was prominent in the 1960s and 1970s. However, there was a critical reaction against labelling and interactionism by the mid-1970s. This is not the place to develop that general critique, but it is important to concentrate attention on some of the criticisms that have implications for its methodology, and its use of the life history, so that interactionist methods are not discarded with the perspective without first examining their potential for critical theoretical perspectives.

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[13] ibid; p. 776

[14] Severyn T. Bruyn, *The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation* (Engelwood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966); p. 167

As we have said, interactionism tends to focus on 'micro' level concerns, using individuals as the basis of its analysis. Furthermore, they tend to focus on what might be considered the 'trivia' of society (that is, social deviance, or what is commonly referred to as 'nuts, sluts and perverts') rather than major social problems like war, poverty, class inequality and 'crimes of the powerful'.[15] Whilst not all interactionism has failed to live up to C. Wright Mills's dictum that biography should enable us to understand both the individual and the society, in which that person is located, but many have been reluctant to focus on broader social structural issues. A fundamental weakness of interactionism has been its neglect of the importance of power. For example, in labelling, the impression we are left with is that individuals passively accept the labels that 'society' sticks on them, although we are also told that some individuals are able to resist labelling, and that labels are more powerful in some situations rather than others.[16] This discussion is rarely carried on within a framework of power relations in society:

> It is unfortunate that, in examining the problematics of societal consensus, the social reaction theorists choose to ignore the way in which deviancy and criminality are shaped by society's larger structure of power and institutions.[17]

In *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, Alvin Gouldner attempts to redress this balance, arguing that legitimacy and authority 'never eliminate power - they merely defocalise it'. Power is 'normalised repression', and deviancy is a 'break from the moral bind' involved in 'normalised repression'.[18]

It is this latter neglect that led some criminologists to move beyond interactionism in the 1970s, to develop a 'new criminology'. This is how Taylor, Walton and Young saw interactionism from their critical perspective:

> Whilst recognising the substantial contribution made by social reaction approach to the illumination of the processes of societal reaction, the ways in which different acts and actors are more or less likely to be apprehended, labelled, and stigmatised, we have developed a critique which is intended to highlight the failure of this approach to deal with the wider or indeed the immediate origins of deviancy, its avoidance of a discussion of the causes of the societal reaction and its narrowing down on to a focus upon the important, but limited, questions of the outcome of societal reaction on a deviant's further behaviour.[19]

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[15] See, for example, Alexander Liazos, 'The poverty of the sociology of deviance: nuts, sluts and perverts' *Social Problems*, vol. 20, no. 1, Summer 1972; pp. 103-120; and Frank Pearce, *Crimes of the Powerful* (London: Pluto Press, 1980)

[16] See, for example, H.M.Trice and P.M.Roman, 'Delabeling, relabeling and alcoholics anonymous' *Social Problems*, vol. 17, Spring 1970; pp. 538-546; Charles H. McCaghy, 'Drinking and deviance disavowal: the case of child molester' *Social Problems*, vol. 16, no. 1, Summer 1968; pp. 43-49; Thomas J. Scheff, 'Negotiating reality: notes on power in the assessment of responsibility' *Social Problems*, vol. 16, no. 1; Summer 1968; pp. 3-17; and David H. Hargreaves, 'Reactions to labelling' in Roger Dale (ed), *Schooling and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971); pp. 201-207

[17] Ian Taylor, Paul Walton and Jock Young, *The New Criminology: For a Social Theory of Deviance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); p. 169

[18] Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (London: Heinemann, 1971); pp. 295-297

[19] Taylor, Walton and Young, op.cit; pp. 170-171

Does this reaction against interactionism mean that we should also react against its methodology, or more specifically, the life history method? Is there a role for this method of data collection in critical and marxist theories? These are not straightforward questions because neither Marxism nor critical theory have developed their own distinctive methodology that is consistent with their theoretical assumptions. As a contribution to that development, we can argue for serious consideration of the life history to be included in the repertoire of the critical researcher.

The new critical approach is not in total opposition to interactionism. Indeed, it appears to incorporate and extend interactionism rather than reject it outright. They do have some common assumptions and starting-points. Both, for example, reject positivism. Having said that, we do need to be a little cautious since some varieties of Marxism do remain within positivist philosophy, and it cannot be said that the rejection of positivism is a distinctive characteristic of Marxism. Nevertheless, many Marxists, particularly those who lean towards humanistic interpretations, would share the interactionists' lack of faith in the possibility of a social science that can talk in terms of 'cause and effect' of human action. Interactionists, for example, do not focus on the initial origins or 'cause' of individuals' behaviour, or 'primary deviation'. After a century of systematic failure in the search for the 'cause' of criminality, the interactionists brought in a refreshing focus on 'secondary deviation', or the societal reaction to crime. This is reflected in the classic statement by Becker who gave the original impetus to labelling:

> Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others or rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label.[20]

In other words, the original act is treated as 'normal', and it is the societal reaction that requires explanation, not the deviant behaviour. Whilst disagreeing that most 'deviance is not the quality of the act', the new criminologists do agree that

> For us, as for Marx and for other new criminologists, deviance is normal - in the sense that men are now consciously involved ... in asserting their human diversity.[21]

And they go on to conclude that

> The task is to create a society in which the facts of human diversity , whether personal, organic or social, are not subject to the power to criminalise.[22]

Whilst Taylor, Walton and Young share the broader concern to reject positivism, they do take it further than the interactionists. They are not happy to merely accept Becker's idea that deviancy is 'not a property of the act', but wish to move on to develop a structural theory, which they later refer to a the 'political economy' of crime, which is part of their argument for the construction of a formal social theory of social deviance built around:

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[20] Howard Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963); p. 9

[21] Taylor, Walton and Young, op.cit; p. 282

[22] ibid;

1. The wider origins of the act
2. The immediate origins of the act
3. The actual act
4. Immediate origins of societal reaction
5. Wider origins of deviant reaction
6. The outcome of the social reaction on further action
7. The nature of the deviant process as a whole[23]

As this model shows, Marxist analysis is going beyond the rejection of positivism:

> A full-blown Marxist theory of deviance, or at least a theory of deviance deriving from a Marxism so described, would be concerned to develop explanations of the ways in which particular historical periods, characterised by particular sets of relationship and means of production, give rise to order society in particular ways. It would ask with greater emphasis the question that Howard Becker poses (and does not face), namely, who makes the rules, and why? A Marxist theory would attempt, that is, to locate the defining agencies, not only in some general market structure but quite specifically in the relationship to the overweening structure of material production and the division of labour ... It would assume ... a degree of consciousness, bound up with men's location in a social structure of production, exchange and domination, which of itself would influence the ways in which men defined as criminal or deviant would attempt to live with their outsider's status. That is, men's reaction to labelling by the powerful would not be seen to be simply a cultural problem - a problem of reacting to a legal status or a social stigma: it would necessarily be seen to be bound up with men's degree of consciousness of domination and subordination in a wider structure of power relationships, operating in particular types of economic context.[24]

As this theoretical perspective has been developed, it has tended to remain at the level of philosophy, and has not very often engaged in empirical research. There are two major consequences of this. Firstly, the critical or Marxist approach leaves itself open to accusations of ideological rhetoric, because it fails to substantiate its claims, but holds on to them as a matter of faith. Secondly, it has failed to develop its own unique and distinctive methodology. As we said in **Chapter 1**, there has been some growing attention paid to this, and here we merely wish to argue for the consideration of the biographical approach as part of that critical methodology. There are at least eight distinctive features of a hypothetical Marxist methodology against which we can chart the life history approach.

First, Marxism is usually thought of as *materialist*. This means that stress is generally placed in explanation upon material factors as opposed to the ideal or cultural factors. So, economics and technologism are seen as emphasised, as the 'forces of production' are seen as crucial, as the 'relations of production' are derivative of them. In other words, a methodology needs to be able to explore the economic base of a society in order to understand the superstructural features. Most methods would be able to undertake this task, because rather than an issue of data collection, this is related more to data analysis, and the categories selected with which to carry out an analysis.

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[23] ibid; ch. 9

[24] ibid; p. 220

Second, Marxism *seeks to identify structure beneath the surface of appearances.* Much social science is concerned with exploring the gap between 'reality' and 'appearance', and as we have seen, as a technique for questionning commonsense or taken-for-granted assumptions, the life history method has the potential to probe 'beneath the surface'.

Third, Marxists *have a predisposition for looking for underlying interests, especially class interests*, which lie beneath cultural or ideological forms, and for looking at the ways in which these forms are reproduced from one generation to another. To do this, a technique is needed which allows the researcher to lay bare and subsequently to transcend the dominant ideology. Again, it is our contention that this is is possible through the life history method insofar as it encourages critical reflexiveness on social structural constraints through the understanding of individual biography.

Fourth, it follows from this that Marxism as an approach *seeks to make connections between objective structures in which human beings act both individually and collectively, and that action itself.* The fact that individuals are constrained by objective circumstances, and yet engage in the process that modifies those objective circumstances is crucial to Marxist theory. Marx himself wrote:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.[25]

Here Marx is stating that human beings are active agents within the processes of history, that 'they make their own history', but at the same time, this activity does not take place in a vacuum. Preceding the activity, there are objectively existing circumstances, such as the realities of the natural and social environment, which sets limits on what is possible. But within these limits there is scope for human freedom and creativity. The life history method, with its emphasis on the inter-relationship between the individual and their society, is well suited for examining this dialectical relationship between individuals and the social structure.

Fifth, this same emphasis shows up insofar as Marxism *is committed to dialectical change.* History is a process of dialectical movement, in which opposing elements are intentionally in conflict with one another. Two elements in antithesis with each other cannot continue to exist, but rather than destroying each other, they are transformed and taken to a higher level - the process of synthesis. As we have seen, the life history method is particularly valuable in investigating process and change.

Sixth, Marxism *studies totalities, or systems as a whole are seen in the process of dialectical development.* As we have said, the life history method has a particular strength in avoiding individual and fragmentary elements of social life as subjects of research, but rather treats them as part of a whole, in their socio-economic, political and historical context. So-called 'facts' have to be understood in terms of the wider social structure. This has implications for the use of biography. In *Theses of Feuerbach*, Marx wrote:

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[25] Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (ed. C.J. Arthur) (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970; 1st. pub. 1845); p. 121

> The materialist doctrine that men are the products of circumstances and upbringing, and that therefore changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances, and that it is essential to educate the educators themselves.[26]

So, biographies are not to be seen as deterministic accounts, that is to say that these are the historical and structural conditions that have shaped individuals' lives. Rather, it is more appropriate to extend the dialectical approach to biography, where this rejects the positivistic concern for simple cause and effect, but refers to inter-connectedness and reciprocity in a complex way:

> The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of determinate individuals, of individuals not as they appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are: i.e. as they act, produce their material life, and are occupied within determinate material limits, presuppositions and conditions, which are independent of their will.[27]

Marx applied this to ideas and knowledge, which he saw as interwoven with material reality, insofar as ideas arise out of material reality, but in turn, the understanding of this reality is shaped by ideas:

> In order to study the connexion between intellectual and material production it is above all essential to conceive the latter in its determined historical form and not as a general category. For example, there corresponds to the capitalist mode of production a type of intellectual production quite different from the medieval mode of production. Unless material production itself is understood in its specific historical form, it is impossible to grasp the characteristics of the intellectual production which corresponds to it or the reciprocal action between the two.[28]

The writings of Antonio Gramsci develop this idea. In his *Prison Notebooks*, he argues that to understand other thinkers' ideas, it is necessary to place those ideas in their historical context, which can be done through studying the thinkers' biographies:

> It is necessary ... to reconstruct the process of intellectual development of the thinker in question in order to identify those elements which were to become stable and 'permanent' - in other words, those which were taken up as the thinker's own thought, distinct from and superior to the 'material' which he had studied earlier and which served as a stimulus to him.[29]

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[26] Karl Marx, 'Theses on Feuerbach' (1844), quoted in T.B.Bottomore and M.Rubel (eds), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965); pp. 82-83

[27] ibid; p. 89

[28] ibid; pp. 96-97

[29] Antonio Gramsci. 'Problems of Marxism' in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (eds), *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971); pp. 382-383

From this Gramsci concludes that the first important task in studying the intellectual contribution of a writer is the 'reconstruction of the author's biography, not only as regards his practical activity, but also and above all as regards his intellectual activity'.[30] Applying this to Gramsci himself, we could argue that in order to understand his thought it is necessary to have some sense of his biography. We need to take account of his inheritance from the past, the social and economic structure in which he grew up, if we are more fully to comprehend his perspective, in a way that reflects his own particular position. As Davidson argues in *Antonio Gramsci: Towards an Intellectual Biography*, the fact that Gramsci was a Sardinian was significant:

> Every Sardinian was the dialectical product of the interaction between his personality and imperialism and its products: the economic and political force of feudalism and its legacy, and the social and ideological mores of the society. How these forces affected him depended on his precise social situation in this structure. It was, of course, a situation he inherited from the past.[31]

In their introduction to the *Prison Notebooks*, Hoare and Nowell-Smith suggest that there is an intimate relationship 'between autobiography and sociological reflection in Gramsci's thought', and Femia argues in *Gramsci's Political Thought*, that as an Italian, Gramsci had good reasons for rejecting orthodox Marxism:

> His Italy was a semi-developed country with deep internal differences between North and South, industrial areas and countryside, modern and ancient. It possessed a labouring mass at widely divergent stages of development in different parts of the country, a proletariat with a broad rural base, a large, essentially conservative peasantry, a preponderance of intellectuals in the working-class leadership, and a style of politics at once bombastic and conspiratorial, conditioned by centuries of fragmentation and foreign domination. Looming above the bewildering and contradictory set of circumstances was the massive spiritual and social power of the Catholic Church, sustained not only by transcendental premises but also by a vast army of clerics and functionaries. This was a country entirely ill-suited to the confident, evolutionary, schematic brand of marxism it had borrowed from Germany.[32]

Later, Femia suggests that we cannot hope to understand or evaluate Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* without knowledge of his previous political activity and experience as a revolutionary, the class struggle in Turin, the formation of the Italian Communist Party, the rise of fascism, and so on. Thus, in order to understand Gramsci's ideas on Marxism, we would need to set them in the context of his personal biography in its socio-cultural and historical context, that is, 1,100 years of foreign rule and exploitation, and a culture borne of the dialectical struggle between the imperialists and the indigenous population during that time. In this way, the life history has an important place in both the theory and practice of Marxism.

Seven, as we have implied, Marxism *adopts a perspective on explanation and analysis that is of a critical nature*. Investigations are always conducted on the basis of the assumption that the social whole is progressing to higher levels, and the crucial question to ask is 'What are the processes and structures which block or prevent the further development or working out of contradictions which when developed would lead to the transformation of society?' To be critical is to pose the antithesis of the existing dominant thesis in order to facilitate the development of the synthesis, which in turn becomes the new thesis to be challenged. In this way, social change occurs and social, cultural and economic development ensues. This is a constant, dynamic process, which prevents ideologies becoming dominant and conservative. Lather argues that critical research 'is a response to the experiences, desires and needs of oppressed people', it 'inspires and guides the dispossessed in the process of cultural transformation', it 'focuses on fundamental contradictions which help dispossessed people see how poorly their "ideologically frozen understandings" serve their interests'[33], and Comstock adds that critical research should stimulate 'a self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action'.[34] As we have discussed, the life history is a valuable technique which encourages the adoption of a critical perspective, to present the understandings of the world view of the research participants, to be a fundamentally dialogic and mutually educative process, to go beyond the surface structure to provide a constant challenge to the underlying assumptions and structures in a reciprocal way.

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[30] ibid;

[31] Alastair B. Davidson, *Antonio Gramsci: Towards an Intellectual Biography* (London: Merlin Press, 1977); pp. 1-2

[32] Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); pp. 2-3

Finally, *eight*, Marxism as a theory is *closely related to practice*. In the same way that there is a dialectical between an individual and society, between biography and history, there is a *dialectical* relationship between theory and practice (and therefore, logically, theory and methodology). In Marxism, this is expressed in the notion of *praxis*[35]. For Marx, all social life is essentially practical, and the implication of this is that any research methodology employed by Marxists should be of a praxical nature. That is, there should be a degree of consonance between the underlying values and assumptions of the theory and the practice of research. We have already indicated what some of these values and assumptions might be. For example, the research should be participatory, non-oppressive, non-exploitative, and reciprocal, in a way that democratises the research process and equalises the relationship between the researchers and the researched, and in the process empowering the latter. Secondly, it should not be unduly concerned with value neutrality, which it should recognise as a myth. Research, in theory and practice, is always a political process. The traditional concerns of a positivist social science for truth and objectivity have to be rejected as myths. Thirdly, it should be emancipatory, and committed to bringing about social change, rather than leaving the social world unaffected. Fourthly, following the point made above, it should develop the capacity for critical reflexiveness. Fifthly, praxical research should be dialectical, for

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[33] Patti Lather, 'Research as praxis' *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 56, no.3, August 1986; pp. 268

[34] D.Comstock, 'A method for critical research' in E.Bredo and W.Feinberg (eds), *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); p. 384

[35] For a detailed discussion of the concept of praxis, see Paul F. Armstrong, 'Praxis in adult education: a synthesis of theory and practice; an account of the praxis study group' in M.Zukas (ed), *Papers from the 17th Annual Conference of the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) 1987* (Leeds: University of Leeds, forthcoming)

> the non-dialectical use of theory leads to a circle where theory is reinforced by experience conditioned by theory ... Far too often ... one is left with the impression that neo-Marxist empirical work is conducted to provide empirical specificities for *a priori* theory.[36]

In other words, theory must not be the determinant of the findings and imposed upon the data. This would be dogmatic. As Carr-Hill has said, imposing Marxist rather than bourgeois categories in research is not a socialist practice.[37] Rather, theory and research should develop and be built dialectically. In sum,

> Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, nondogmatic, informing, and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life; and, moreover, it must be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed.[38]

As the value and use of the life history method has been discussed in **Part I** of this paper, and as its practice is illustrated in **Part II**, one can judge for one's self how adequate the life history method is in going beyond interactionism and meeting these criteria for critical or Marxist methodology.

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[36] Patti Lather, op.cit; pp. 261

[37] Roy Carr-Hill, 'Radicalising survey methodology' *Quality and Quantity*, vol. 18, 1984; p. 290

[38] Patti Lather, op.cit; p. 262

PART II DOING LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH

Chapter Six DOING LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH: A WORKED EXAMPLE

It was suggested in **Chapter 1** that part of the value of the life history method lies in the fact that it is quite accessible for use on postgraduate courses in social sciences and education courses. Since the publication of the first edition of this paper, the Open University has introduced a taught M.Sc course on *Advanced Educational and Social Research Methods* course [DE801]. As part of this postgraduate course, participants are required to carry out an 'ethnography project' using the life history method.

In this chapter, the aim is to describe the process through which this is done, by summarising the procedures to be followed and the advice given, before presenting an account of an actual example that has been carried out following these guidelines. Whilst the worked example is not perfect, it is used as illustration of the practice, process and problems of using the life history method in a simple project. This is followed by an appendix which, by way of conclusion, lists some practical notes of guidance for any one wishing to carry out life history research.

RATIONALE

The life history interview is seen as one of the central research methods employed in ethnography, along with participant observation. Unfortunately, participant observation can be a very time-consuming activity, and on taught courses there is not always time not only to do the actual observational work, but the necessary preliminary activities of gaining entry, and establishing rapport, unless researchers select areas in which they are already accepted participants. The life history method, on the other hand is much more manageable as a student project, given a limited amount of time.

The first step is to begin to focus on what you are interested in. Let us assume that the broad focus is the study of 'Images of Society', which is essentially an investigation of differential subjective experiences of the world based on social class. As with most research strategies, the next phase is to clarify the focal point through a review of relevant literature. In this case, it would be necessary to identify and review the recent literature on social stratification in the society in which the research is to be done, to find out what line of enquiry would be most useful. As part of this review, such literature would be examined not only for its content, but in the methodological techniques that have been used for the study of social stratification, and, in particular, the use of qualitative techniques which have generated data on subjective experiences. **In Part III** of this document, there is a section presenting some research that has been carried out on social stratification using the life history approach.

Having done this review, it will be necessary to place some constraints on the research project, or else it will cease to be an opportunity to try out first hand the experience of doing qualitative research, and will instead become a full-scale research project, beyond the scope of a taught course. It is therefore suggested that the project should be limited to two interviews with two different respondents. These interviews might each last between one and two hours, during which time the objective is to generate data on how both of the subjects conceptualise the social world with special reference to class imagery, which would enable a preliminary comparative analysis to be undertaken.

Limiting the project in this way makes the project both manageable and straightforward, in the sense that many of the problems that researchers like Bogdan might have faced will be avoided. The constraints on the research design will also mean that the data generated would not be as substantial as that gathered by those who are able to spend longer in the field, and thus during data analysis, there will be less material to work with, and since there will be no opportunity to go back to the respondents to supplement the data, the original data collected needs to be fairly comprehensive and to the point. In other words, the progressive focusing needs to be economical and precise. In order to achieve this there are certain guidelines to bear in mind before and during the research.

GUIDELINES

1. In selecting your 'sample' of two people, it is very tempting to call on people you know, but in many ways interviewing friends and relatives is more difficult than interviewing strangers. There is a tendency to slip out of the researcher role into one that is more familiar, and this hinders data collection. On the other hand, if you select strangers, make sure there is a basis to that selection. In other words, it requires some degree of theoretical sampling, so that the concern is not with typicality or representativeness, but with identifying cases who, through comparative analysis, will assist in the development of concepts and theory. The requirements of sampling, therefore, are based on particular, theoretically relevant dimensions of similarity and contrast. Given that, it may be advisable to select one subject first, and then subsequently think about an appropriate second subject. This selection might be based on some specific criteria of comparison or contrast. Two possible bases for such a selection are either to find someone who is essentially similar to your first subject on some important criterion, such as social class, or is fundamentally different. Either of these procedures will ensure some basis for subsequent comparisons. In a sense, any couple of informants will generate some fruitful comparisons, and so this need not be a major problem, but it is important that the decision is both conscious and reflexive, and is justified in the write-up.

2. Having selected suitable subjects, the next step is to make contact with them, and explain the purpose of the research project. Generally it is advisable to give a fairly straightforward account of what you are doing and why. However, it may be deemed desirable not to fully inform subjects of the aims of the research in case this has a reactive effect on the subjects responses. On the other hand, it may be considered that there is a moral responsibility to do so, and thus each researcher has to make this decision on the basis of his or her own ethical principles, balanced with the pay-offs for the research. Some potential subjects may be reluctant, and should not be pushed too hard, since this may mean they do not co-operate as fully and give such valuable data as a subject who is interested in participating in the project. It is a good idea to fix a date, time and venue for the first interview as soon as possible. These should be to the convenience of the subject.

3. If you have not done any interviewing before, or unsure whether the questions you wish to ask (the interview schedule) will get at the kind of data you are looking for, it may be a good idea to pilot the interview first. In these circumstances, it may be helpful to try it out with somebody who is familiar to you, and who would be honest in their opinions as to the validity and usefulness of the questions, as well as problems with your interviewing style, and so on. There are a number of hints here. Firstly, be relaxed. All interviewers get anxious and nervous, especially when they first make contact with a stranger, and remember that very often interviewees are more nervous than you will be, and so it is important to put them at their ease too. Establishing rapport is a common research problem, but the second thing to remember is that you should not talk too much. Keep your questions brief and to the point, avoiding asking more than one question at a time, and making them as open-ended as possible (that is, try to encourage them to say more than 'yes' or 'no' to your questions). The idea of an interview is to obtain data from a subject, and so the more talking you do, the less opportunity they will have. Also, when they are talking, try not to interrupt, except if you feel you need to guide their focus a little. Don't worry about silence. You may be tempted to come straight in with another question when they appear to have finished talking, but try waiting a few seconds, or merely commenting 'That's very interesting'. The ability to listen and prompt is the key to successful interviewing, which should be like a relaxed conversation. Avoid reading questions like a script, or writing down everything they say - both these can be very offputting to subjects. Hints and guidance on interviewing are endless, and are no substitute for actually practising it, and having the confidence to know that you can do it, and do it well. You will need to be reflective about your practice afterwards. In the case of the pilot, you can ask your subject about the interview, but in actual instances, it is worth taking time afterwards to think about why the interview went well or badly, and do not be hesitant to change your approach, questions, order of questions, if you think it may improve the outcome of the next interview. Each interview is a learning experience.

4. In focusing your questions always remember the overall aim of the project, and try to keep your questions and prompts relevant. It may be helpful to get the interview under way by asking some straightforward demographic questions, even though you may know the answers already, such as asking about place of birth, parents' occupations, brothers/sisters (if any), early family and community life, educational career, occupational career, marriage/family and geographical mobility. Do not, however, be too ambitious in what you can discover in an hour or two of interviewing. And do be careful of sensitive topics, such as divorce, death, and income!

5. There are basically two techniques of recording your data: note-taking or tape-recording. Notes should be taken even if tape recorders are used, since this is an aid to concentration, and will assist in the data analysis. There are advantages and disadvantages of using tape-recorders (mainly the reactive effect of the technology in creating nervousness and anxiety, but also practical difficulties of power supply, placement of microphone, changing the tape over, etc). Neither approach is perfect; I have a preference for tape-recording, but if it is intrusive and disruptive then it must be switched off, and revert to note-taking. Do not forget also that using a tape recorder will generate more data, and therefore will need more time for data analysis than note-taking. Either way, try them out in the pilot interview.

6. The data should be analysed as quickly after the first interview as possible. Go through your notes, or listen through the tapes a few times to familiarise yourself with the data. You should find that patterns and themes begin to emerge (indeed, you may well have been conscious of this happening during the interview). If this does not, it may be helpful to look again at some of the literature you have reviewed for ideas to examine, but basically it is better to immerse yourself in the data you have collected, to allow ideas, questions, even hypotheses to emerge from the data themselves. Look out for areas where further probing might be desirable, and for the use of taken-for-granted categories such as 'the rich', or adjectives like 'rough', and use these to get the subject to open up what they mean by them in the follow-up interview. If their answers in the first interview seem confusing, inconsistent or contradictory, do not be afraid to explore them with the subject, though with tact and without necessarily expecting to get a satisfactory unravelling of them (because sometimes we do hold contradictory views, or behave inconsistently, without any obvious rationalisation). Bear also in mind the data that is generated during the first interview with the second subject, which should be carried out before you return to do the second interview with the first subject. By this stage, the comparison between the data derived from both interviews, should generate a sufficient number of topics to pursue to enable you to go back to do a follow-up interview, to obtain data that clarify, exemplify and supplement rather than repeat what you have already got, and focuses more progressively on themes that have emerged after the first round of interviews. Do not worry if your second interview is both more directive and shorter than your first interview.

7. Since data collection and analysis are overlapping phases of qualitative research, you will already have a good idea what to look for when you have completed your data collection. Some of the themes that emerge will be those that you started out by focusing on, but there may well be others that have emerged in the research, and may even surprise you. You will need to distinguish life history facts from interpretations that subjects give during their interviews. You will need to put all the life history material together to write a succinct and organised account of both subject's lives. The bulk of the analysis will need to be organised around the themes and categories that have emerged, and draw on supporting evidence from the data to illustrate the point. At the same time, if there is conflicting evidence, do not ignore it, but include it with some commentary or reformulation of the model you are constructing. Extracts can either be summarised (without distortion), or preferably, quoted verbatim.

8. The analysis will also need to include a comparative discussion for the development of the models derived from each subject. The limited scope of this project would not permit a genuine analytic inductive process to be carried out, but in a more restricted way, the development of a theory is possible through comparison, sorting, classifying, grouping, and re-grouping. Using this constant comparative method, analytic themes between the subjects should be generated against which similarities and contrasts between the subjects can be measured. Inevitably, such analysis will only be superficial, but remember that the objective is to give you experience in doing this kind of qualitative research, rather than a full-scale study. You might wish to indicate areas where you feel there is potential for further research.

9. In writing up the project, you will need to begin with an introduction, in which you can briefly outline your aims, procedures, initial interests, selection of the subjects, and how the researched was carried out. Your report will then need to include a summary of the life histories of the two subjects, organised in a chronological way, providing sufficient detail to assist the reader to understand the analysis, which will be organised, in this case, around the social imagery of society of each respondent, first separately, and then in a comparative way. Finally, a characteristic of qualitative research is that is generally carried out reflexively, to show the stages the research went through, problems encountered at various stages, the thinking behind the strategies employed, and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the study. Thus, the report might conclude with a reflexive account which encompasses these issues in a critically reflective way.

LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH IN ACTION

The preceding discussion is somewhat abstract, but the author has undertaken a piece of research following the guidelines given and has produced the following report, as an illustration of what the final product of such an exercise might be. Two points are worth noting prior to reading it. Firstly, it is not included as a perfect, ideal-typical example, and was carried out with most of the constraints that would face any part-time graduate student undertaking such research. Secondly, it is someone else's experience (the author), and as with all research techniques, the best way to learn about it is to do it, rather than read or talk about it. Consequently, the report is followed by some briefer, more general guidelines for the practice of life history research, to encourage everybody to have a go at doing it.

THE SOCIAL CLASS IMAGERY OF TWO FURTHER EDUCATION LECTURERS

Introduction

It was Karl Marx[1] who proposed the distinction between the concept of a 'class-in-itself' (that is, a class consisting of a number of individuals who occupy the same position within the social relations of production, but who are not united by any particular ideology) and a 'class-for- itself' (a class whose members are conscious of their common identity and who are organised, politically, so as to promote their common interests against the interests of other classes). For Marx, then, a class only exists when its members are united by a shared ideological awareness, or class consciousness. The extent of class consciousness remains somewhat indeterminate in Marxist theory, and indeed some individuals may actively support the interests of the class to which they should be opposed. This was termed by Marx as 'false consciousness' - a concept which might help us to understand Engels's exasperation about working class support for the Tories in the 1867 General Election, and still prevalent in the 1979, 1983 and 1987 Elections.

In order to explore the development of class consciousness, or even false consciousness, the ethnographic style of research, with its naturalistic concern for social meanings of behaviour, seen to be dependent on social interaction and social consciousness, offers us a potentially valuable approach. Whereas the structured interview or the questionnaire might be useful in exploring social class as an objective social fact, class consciousness and social class imagery may be more validly investigated through ethnography, which may well involve some form of unstructured, in-depth interviewing which is characteristic of the life history method. This method - though central in anthropology - has had a rather chequered history in social and educational research, having been popular in the 1920s and 1930s (albeit in Chicago) and has only recently been resurrected as a potentially useful method of social research. Two recently-published books on the subject[2] as well as its inclusion in the Open University DE304 course testify to the renewed enthusiasm for the method. There is still much debate concerning its value as a method of research, how reliable and valid (both internally and externally) its data, but nevertheless provides an interesting contrast to more formal structured interviews used to investigate social class.

The life history method, then, is employed in this project in order to investigate subjective awareness of class and class images held by members of society. One of the main criticisms of the method has to do with its external validity, for there is very little possibility of doing in-depth interviews with but a very small 'sample', and the chances of making that sample, however randomly selected, representative are remote. Typically, the life history method uses the 'case study' approach, which avoids the problem of representativeness by not seeking to generalise from the case or cases under study. For practical purposes the procedure for selecting subjects for study is that referred to as 'theoretical sampling'[3], the purpose of which is to discover and develop categories rather than to test out pre-existing ones, which is a procedure which allows new 'samples' to be selected as the research proceeds in order to test any emergent hypotheses as new cases. Cases are analysed until no new categories seem to appear - a point of 'theoretical saturation'[4]. Whilst this clearly differs from more traditional notions of statistical sampling, it is nevertheless indicative of a systematic approach to research.

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[1] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852)

[2] Daniel Bertaux (ed), *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences* (London: Sage, 1981); and Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983)

With this in mind, I decided to approach two subjects who were. on the face of it, 'conceptually' related in a number of ways which would facilitate a comparison between two cases. Since the main focus is social class imagery, I anticipated that those who have been socially mobile might be more aware of social class, and for this reason selected two subjects who were craft teachers in further education. The profession of teaching has traditionally been a vehicle for social mobility, enabling children from working class origins to become 'middle class', and in further education this is particularly likely as craftsmen and other skilled workers are able to teach their skills and crafts. Also I chose this occupation because I am involved in the in-service education of adult and post-secondary teachers and have an interest in their subjective experiences. Of course, it also meant that I was in a position to select subjects from our in-service students whom I initially only vaguely knew, and yet did not know each other. I could also be sure that they would be prepared to co-operate (this has something to do with the ethos of research in a university environment, as well as my status as one of their lecturers).

The Life Histories

(a) *Eric*

Eric was born in 1936 into a respectable working-class area of East Hull known as 'Garden Village', the second son of an unskilled factory labourer. Encouraged by his parents, he passed the 'Eleven-Plus', and went on to the local grammar school. As his parents expected no more of him in terms of educational achievement, he was then expected to leave school at the earliest opportunity in order to take up an apprenticeship, which he did with a small local firm as a sheetmetal worker. For the five years he was apprenticed, Eric attended night school in order to obtain City and Guilds qualifications in sheetmetal work. As soon as he had completed his apprenticeship, at the age of 21, Eric was required to do two years' National Service. After two months' basic training in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in Devon, he was posted for the remainder of his service in Germany. Upon leaving the armed forces, he found himself a temporary teaching post in a secondary modern school in Hull prior to enrolling on a three-year teacher training course at Shoreditch College (in Egham, Surrey). Having successfully completed this course, he returned to Hull to teach. He taught at a secondary modern school near where he was born and currently living, and then moved to another for promotion after two years, still in Hull and still teaching crafts. At the same time, Eric had begun to do some part-time evening teaching, in a youth club and at the local prison. In 1970, Eric moved into further education when he was offered the chance to become a tutor in the prison full-time. This move enabled him to study for a diploma, a BA(Ed) and subsequently an MA in adult education. He is presently a Lecturer Grade II and Deputy Education Officer at the prison, now responsible not just for craft teaching, but all evening classes in the prison, as well as basic education provision. He is married, with two teenage children and lives in a prestigious residential area on the western edge of the city of Hull.

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[3] Open University, 'Research Design'. Block 3B, Part 5, DE304 *Research Methods in Education and the Social Sciences* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1979); p.54

[4] ibid;

(b) *John*

John was born in Wilshaw, Huddersfield in 1934, the son of a skilled, self-employed tailor, although his father had done a wide variety of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs before John was born. Soon after his birth, his parents were able to buy their own shop, which they lived over. Keen on education, they paid for John to go to grammar school after he had failed the 'Eleven-Plus'. They were disappointed when John wanted to leave school as early as possible. They reluctantly agreed, providing he took on an apprenticeship, which he did at the age of fifteen with Huddersfield Corporation as a sheetmetal worker, engaged in building bodies for buses. Attendance at night school enabled John to obtain City and Guilds qualifications in sheetmetal work. At the end of his apprenticeship, John was called up for National Service. He opted to join the RAF, but was rejected on medical grounds, and so returned to work for Huddersfield Corporation for four more years before going into private industry to become a foreman in fabrication. After three more years, John became a scientific technician at Bradford University, which stimulated his interest in becoming a craft teacher in further education, which he did in 1964. He has since worked in three different further education colleges. The first two were in West Yorkshire, but he then moved to Grimsby, where he is currently employed as a Lecturer Grade II, no longer primarily a craft teacher, but in the general studies department, doing much of his teaching on MSC courses for the unemployed at a college annexe. He is married with two children and lives in a detached house in Cleethorpes. An important aspect of his life is his spare-time activities, mainly crafts - silversmithing, art and above all, motor vehicle body-building (he is presently engaged in a project to rebuild a Rolis Royce and a 1930s Morris commercial van). Having recently done a diploma course in social studies, he is beginning a full-time Masters course in adult education, on secondment from his full-time lecturing job.

Social Class Imagery Analysis

Both Eric and John were told that the life history interview was concerned to investigate the process of becoming a lecturer in further education. They were not told that I was interested in social class imagery. It was interesting to note how both, though particularly Eric, geared their life histories towards my avowed concern. Their accounts of their early lives, educational and job experiences, and in Eric's case, National Service experience, were obviously constructed in order to provide an understanding of how they came to end up as lecturers in further education. This should offer support for the idea of not telling subjects the real purpose of the unstructured interview, since this could have a reactive effect and bias their stories. Nevertheless, in both cases, social class images were soon introduced by the subjects themselves without any prompting.

(a) *Eric*

Eric began his life history interview by saying:

> *Both mother and father were working class, father left school at 14, mother leaving school at 12 ...*

In the second interview, Eric was asked what he meant when he said his parents were working class:

> *I think that I look back to my father and see him as being someone who left school at 14 who had a menial type of job, a labouring job for 40 years, and I don't think you can make him other than working class working in that kind of job.*

Occupation, then, was a clear determinant of social class, as far as Eric was concerned. But he did go beyond this when talking about the fact that his parents never seemed to be aware of their social class position:

> *They lived within that class and I think they were quite ... I think in those years perhaps you could, in the '20s and '30s and '40s, I think people could well live in their class and not really be bothered about what other people were doing and I think perhaps they were subservient in some way, but I think he {his father} was quite willing to stay where he was and not particularly better himself.*

From this emerge three inter-related themes: education, occupation and social mobility. As far as occupation was concerned, Eric's father was 'a labourer all his life at Reckitt and Colman's in Hull', who had stayed with the firm from the age of 14 to 62 when he took early retirement, partly through ill-health. As far as Eric is concerned, a labourer is at the lowest point of the occupational scale, and in the area in which he was brought up, people were either labourers or tradesmen. In the second interview, in talking about the area in which he was born and brought up, Eric described the people who lived there as

> *Labourers, generally, and if anyone was a tradesmen which presumably was in their eyes, or it was in their eyes the next step up the ladder and their wasn't many tradesmen ...a tradesmen was thought of as being something of a star job.*

Given this link between occupation and social mobility (reflected by the idea of a 'ladder'), we should not be surprised to find that Eric was encouraged to think of becoming a tradesman in order to 'better himself' in a way his father had not been able to do. During the first interview, Eric said:

> *I think I was encouraged by my father being a labourer to take a trade which I think to all labourers, all working class to have ... to serve an apprenticeship and become a tradesman is the epitome perhaps of the working class child.*

It is interesting to note that because he took an apprenticeship in order to become socially mobile, Eric did not feel that he had got as much out of his grammar school education as he should have done. His parents did not see education as a vehicle for social mobility. Eric had passed the 'Eleven-Plus' which he said was 'in my family rather out of the ordinary', and

> *I was given a lot of encouragement to pass the Eleven-Plus, but I think after that stage, after that achievement - and it was a great achievement in a family like mine - I don't think I was ever given an awful lot of encouragement from home ... er, I can never really remember either parent saying to me @Have you done your homework? Haven't you got any homework?' I think I'd reached their peak in their ... in their eyes, having passed the Eleven-Plus. I don't think it was even suggested that I stay on after the age of 16 because, as I say, both parents left school, one at 14, one at 12, me brother left at 14. To stay on for two years was higher education in their minds. I had stayed an extra two years above the norm.*

Eric reflected a little more on this in the second interview:

> *My own grammar school education, in fact I hadn't done as well as I could have done, and I myself was downgrading a little bit my educational attainment, and er ... to have got a five-year apprenticeship completed with top educational qualifications was ... I could er ... I still didn't feel it was as high as I could go.*

Of course, Eric was subsequently to demonstrate this to himself, for having achieved these 'top' technical qualifications, he went on to a three-year teacher training course, and later on to a diploma and two higher degree courses. In the second interview, Eric said that his 'search for educational qualifications', the fact that he did a three-year training course, was due to his awareness of social status. He was conscious of wishing to be seen on a par with other teachers when, in general, craft teaching was considered low status:

> *Well, I think after being in education I've read about the status of the teacher and, particularly, the status of the craft teacher, and even in those days before going to teacher training college, I think perhaps from my days at the grammar school where we had one craft teacher only in a grammar school, even at school I realised he wasn't the same as the other teachers - he wasn't accepted in the same way as a lot of the other teachers, and I think I thought at that time was I should aim for as many qualifications as I could, thinking perhaps qualifications was something to do with status.*

The point that this brings out is that his parents' limited vision of the significance of education did have an effect on Eric's educational achievements in the short-term, but not in the longer term. Although to be academically successful was unusual in Eric's family, he made it clear that it was not unusual for children from working class families to got to grammar school:

> *At our particular school it was reasonably common. It was a three-form entry and in the 'A' class there was a teacher who coached for the Eleven-Plus ... and I think she did have a pretty good record. I think there was perhaps 12 or 14 pretty religiously each year got through out of a three-form entry. So I think that at that particular school it was, you know, it was a good school within a working class area.*

This notion of a 'working class area' was referred to on several occasions during the first interview. This is how he saw the area in which he was born, but he was also aware of other areas worse than his, which he characterised as 'rough'. For example, his first teaching post was in a school in one such area:

> *... it was certainly an ordeal because it was the fishdock area of Hull, er ... quite a rough area. I mean I came from a working class area, but it wasn't quite as working class as that one, I don't think.*

When asked to explain what he meant by this, he replied:

> *Yeh, well, I came from Garden Village which was one of the ... sort of er ... industrial firms of the country, er, Reckitts or the Garden Village Company of which Reckitts were only a small part. People tend to think it was the Reckitts' estate but it wasn't, it was the Garden Village Company of which Reckitts had a small amount, which was quite large gardens and er ... and although it was rented accommodation people certainly thought of, er, you know, the housing in those days as very much the same way as people who owned their own housing these days. Whereas the Boulevard area was very much terraces, which I'd seen before because the Mersey Street School which I originally went to before passing the Eleven-Plus was in a similar area. But I did think that the conditions were that much worse in the Boulevard area.*

Later on in the first interview, when talking about his teaching practice at Shoreditch College, he referred to Shepherds Bush {London} as 'once again another very rough area ... I was at a school which had a very bad name and I don't think it was any worse or any better than Boulevard'. In the second interview, I tried to get Eric to talk in more depth about what he meant when he described those areas as 'rough', but he was not very forthcoming:

> *I think what I meant was that in a teaching was hard work; in fact, discipline-wise at both schools you had to be on your toes, and I've taught at other schools since and I think perhaps you look back after 20 years and see things differently. But I think in both those cases that discipline-wise in both schools, it was very, very difficult, you were on your toes all the time.*

Eric was then asked why he felt he needed to be on his toes all the time, and again his answer is not revealing:

> *Well, er ... I ... there was an educational process which you were trying to ... er, trying to follow, and in fact in both those schools I did feel that the educational process could in fact be broken down by the lack of discipline.*

This emphasis on discipline was to emerge in both interviews with Eric, though interestingly he did not perceive himself to be a disciplinarian:

> *I think I can be but I think I found in schools later that in fact it wasn't necessary or whether with experience I'd gained certain things in education, in teaching that I didn't need that.*

In the first interview, it came over that Eric associated discipline with 'working class education', and the point that 'the children respected it ... respected the school for it'.

But there is a further, more local aspect of geographical area to be considered. The city of Kingston-upon-Hull is divided east/west by the River Hull, and there is a sense in which for local people that there are social class differences between the two. The 1981 Census figures reveal the following[5]:

	West Hull	**East Hull**
Owner Occupied	**46.8%**	**31.0%**
Council Housing	**31.2%**	**60.7%**
Private Rented	**22.0%**	**8.3%**

Although patterns of house ownership are only one indicator of social class, such statistical data would offer objective support to the idea that there are social class differences between the two wards, with nearly two-thirds of the housing in East Hull rented from the council, whereas it is less than one-third in West Hull. This is not to say, however, that West Hull does not have its working class areas. As Eric has pointed out, some of the worst housing in Hull is in the Boulevard area of West Hull, which is predominantly privately-rented terraced housing (most now subject to compulsory purchase orders) and known as the 'fishdock area'.[6] Since it was Eric who made reference to this geographical distinction, I pursued the topic at the end of the first interview. Having asked whether his wife was local, Eric had replied 'Yes, but West Hull', and so I then asked whether there was a difference:

> *No, I don't think so. People say there is, but I don't think there is.*

However, as it emerged again in the second interview, I asked Eric to discuss this again after he had told the following story:

> *It was quite strange really, it was only last week that I met a girl who recognised me from going to school and this is with a beard and going back forty years and, er, she said, 'Ah,' she said, 'You've moved a long way - all the way to Willerby [area in West Hull]', and she said, 'I only live', she said, 'My mother still lives in the same house that I was ...', and she said, 'I live just across the road', she said, 'I wouldn't think of moving', she said, 'I walk across to see her every night'.*

Two points emerge from this story. Firstly, it appears that the geographical move to Willerby, a middle class residential suburb of West Hull is also seen to reflect social mobility. The phrase 'You've moved a long way' has a deliberate double-meaning. Eric reinforced this:

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[5] Derived from Table H 'Housing: Tenure, amenities and availability of car', *OPCS Monitor, Parliamentary Constituency Monitor - Yorkshire and Humberside* (ref. CEN81 PCM 10)
12 October 1982

[6] A description of this working class community is provided by Jeremy Tunstall in *The Fishermen: the Sociology of an Extreme Occupation* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1962), Chapter III

> *... this thing of moving from East to West Hull ... she was still an East Hull girl who lives just round the corner from the school she went to.*

Although Eric believes that the situation has changed, with local authority housing policies that moved people from the 'fishdock area' to the large council estates of East Hull,

> *But I think there's plenty of traditional areas in East Hull where it's very unusual for the people to move out across the town. They certainly will move within East Hull - it's almost as if it were a town in itself.*

Whilst Eric saw the social class composition of East Hull as very much the same, he was also aware of some differences:

> *We were in the area that was half way to the countryside so presumably we were ... we had grass between our house and the next door, with a field not far away, and there was a park and Reckitts' playing field which was just across ...so we're getting to a green ... to almost a greenbelt area where the area where my father my father and my mother were brought up in was two miles closer to town.*

Eric saw that moving even this short distance within the same area reflected some degree of social mobility of his family. The area in which his parents were born was characterised, as we have already seen, as 'working class', and even more 'downtown' than the area in which Eric himself was brought up in, for

> *it was in an industrial area, er ... very ... in fact it doesn't exist now - the houses have been knocked down in the meantime. But, er, very small terraced houses, er, they were two-bedroomed, er, kitchen and one room downstairs, you know, two up and two down type.*

The second theme to emerge from the story is the idea of a close-knit community. Typically, studies of working class communities have emphasised the close proximity of parents and their married children - the idea of the extended family, which Eric mentions.[7] Eric was aware that this girl he met would have been representative of the working class community of twenty years ago, but admitted to being amazed to find evidence of it still, and felt that she was now untypical. Because Eric had spent most of his life in Hull, I asked him whether he saw Hull as a 'close-knit community'?

> *A number of communities, most certainly, er ... mind you, I must admit I haven't had an awful lot of experience other than in the Forces and college of living away ... of living anywhere else, but I do find that although I do have friends who have moved out of town, I do find a lot of people who have lived all their lives in the Hull area, and, er, what with family —extended family, they don't move far, and they are close.*

It was clear, then, that Eric had a sense of local identity. He identified with Hull, but interestingly not Yorkshire. I asked him whether coming from Hull was more important than being working class:

> *No, I feel I've achieved quite a lot so therefore I look back at my working class origins perhaps much more than I look at being a Hull person, although I do.*

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[7] See, for example, the classic study, Peter Willmott and Michael Young, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962)

This brings us, finally, to Eric's own self-conception of social class. In the first interview, I posed the question that if his children were asked which social class they came from, would they say 'middle class'? Eric agreed that they might, but added that he still very much saw himself as working class. I pursued this in the second interview:

> *I still look back very much to my childhood, and my bringing up and I still ... I think to an extent model myself on the way that I was brought up in ... sort of socially and politically I don't think I've changed an awful lot with education. Perhaps I'm more far-seeing than I was. I think perhaps this is the thing with education and, er, I can now see well ... I sometimes do meet people who knew me at school, as a teenager. and the first thing they say is 'Ah, you've done well for yourself'. When I talk to them I think I can see that their sight hasn't gone much further than what it was thirty years ago.*

(b) *John*

Early on in John's first interview, he revealed that his family is fairly close-knit, with only one of his grandparents having been born outside the West Riding of Yorkshire:

> *She was born in Knightsbridge, and in fact I've been to the house this summer ... directly opposite Harrods, in a very select area because ... it's most amazing because I always thought she was a cockney and she used to describe when she was a little girl to me, about Hyde Park, guardsmen and er ... Obviously what ... exactly what she described to me was just outside her front door. So I was rather disappointed in that because I expected her to be in, you know, some working class area in Bermondsey, or somewhere like the East End of London. She wasn't, but her father was a plumber, and the house was still there, and the house - I would imagine - would be occupied like this house is, by a successful tradesman.*

This extract tells us a number of interesting things about John's social class imagery, not least that John is aware of the existence of social class and introduced this into his interview without any prompting. But more than this, there is a sense in which John appears to be disappointed that his origins are not as working class as he would wish. He goes on to talk about one of his grandfathers who was the son of a dentist but himself a self-employed craftsman, as a member not of the 'real' working class but of the 'aspiring' working class. It might be that this is a useful concept for understanding John's own position. Also implicit in the above quote is John's own self-image as a 'successful tradesman'. As the son of a skilled tailor who subsequently became a shopowner and an employer, it would be difficult to objectively categorise John as coming from a working class background. Indeed, there is much 'middle-classness' about John's biography. His parents were 'bright' and positively in favour of education, attending adult education classes in such subjects as local history, who were disappointed when John failed the Eleven-Plus and when he wanted to leave school early instead of staying on to go to university, having paid for him to attend grammar school. His parents also voted Conservative, much to John's apparent chagrin (he is a Liberal).

Although John said,

> *I was born probably in the height of the Depression in 1934, me Dad had been brought up as a tailor, and of course he was the first person to feel the effects of the Depression. If anybody cuts down on anything, the first thing you cut down on is clothes,*

he stressed on two occasions that he had 'never been without'. In the second interview, John said:

> *I don't know if I was very naive as a child, er, I wasn't aware of this difference between ... I wasn't brought up to be aware that people were better off or worse off then we were. It was obvious that some people were very poor.*

This conflicted with what he had said in the first interview:

> *... within the area I lived we had a house with a bathroom and there was people just across the back - they'd come from a mining area in Barnsley during the Depression and early in the War ... they came to the War and they were living in a derelict shop. Oh yes, I mean, yes, people were living in virtually caves, you know, terrible houses, underdwellings and god knows what. Oh yes, I've always been aware of this, always. Me Dad's customers were ... aware .. you know, me Dad ... yes, always, always.*

Yet, in a number of instances John persisted in implying working class origins. For example, when asked about the background of his 'pals', he said that one of his colleagues (whom I knew):

> *may claim to be working class but his mother is aspiring working class. His mother is very bright. They had a boarding house and they're not quite ... I mean, mine was working class, but his were aspiring working class.*

He even went so far as to say that he felt his social class position had been a disadvantage to him and

> *up to ten years ago, I had a great chip on my shoulder, I'm sure I had. I felt that I should have done better.*

When asked to explain this, he did so not in terms of social class, but in terms of the value placed on his particular skills:

> *The vehicle-body industry which I was apprenticed to collapsed and people who were in textiles, you know, some idiot could get into textiles and be a mill manager simply because he could read and write, because he was ... there I am, a very skilled person ... couldn't ... you know, getting a job of £10 a week whereas, you know ... I was struggling to get a job of £10 a week. Now suddenly the reverse has happened that vehicles, or the type of vehicle I'm interested in, are worth a lot of money. So consequently from being somebody where there were dozens of people when I was 21/22, you know, who could build cars in their sixties, had all retired and died, and, er, people who've got the skill and knowledge that I've had are very few and far between.*

He agreed that he had got where he was today on the basis of these skills. At one point in his first interview, John described himself 'like God in the vehicle-body line' because of the scarcity of his skills. He did some part-time work for Aston Martin cars, which he found was better paid than his full-time job:

> *The funny thing about it, they would send a taxi for me, and I would be taken home by car, and I was like God. In fact, I'm still like God in the vehicle-body line.*

But he was able to save this extra money he earned, so that by the time he was 25,

> *I was quite a wealthy young man. I was not wealthy in the respect I was ... I was not wealthy compared with wealthy people. I was wealthy compared to my pals who were doing National Service.*

John used this money to buy a house so that he could get married:

> *In fact me Dad said when I got married, 'Oh you're getting married, lad. I know where there's a house,' he says, 'Get a mortgage and you'll be alright'. This was a terraced house, so I said, 'Well, I'm not thinking about a terraced house, I'm thinking about a semi, Dad'. 'Oh, a semi - what do you want a semi for?' he says, 'You can't afford a semi'. So I bought myself ... we bought a semi, which costs us £1475 ... We lived there for about four years and I decided it was about time we moved into a detached one ... and I was earning £10.50 at Bradford University, I moved into my detached bungalow, dorma bungalow, three-bedroom dorma bungalow with twelve miles open view.*

But it was not only financial and material reward that comes from possession of skills and expertise, but social status:

> *Going back to this business of, er, cars and vehicles and what-not, er ... I'm very fortunate, I seem to have ... well, it's like being in ... I suppose it's like being an expert or living at a university. If you are an expert in something, people accept you very easily, don't they? In vehicle-bodywork I'm quite well known.*

This source of social status was followed up in the second interview:

> *A person was respected by his ability to work, and, um, I found it ... probably this is a modern trend, but people don't respect so much this business of ability, to be a master of some craft, skill or ... the ability to sing well, to play an instrument well, um, to play a game well, to play ... to be a good cricketer, or to be a good rugby player, or something else ... A person got out of his class because he got dignity by being well ... you could be a good joiner, you could be a good woodworker, but you were measured more on your abilities than on your ... well, I don't know how ... standing in the bank.*

So, social status based on expertise and skills were seen by John as a source of social mobility, alongside education, hard work and good fortune. All these were, for John, interrelated in the idea of - to use his phrase - 'clogs to clogs in three generations'. In other words, his social class image of his family background and the area he was brought up in is characterised by both upward and downward mobility. In talking about the area in which he was born he said that there was

> *total social mobility. We were up and down like, er, yo-yos. I mean, we got rid of the gentry in Huddersfield in the .. end of the eighteenth century. They were all dead because the mill owners had taken over ... Terrific social mobility. I'm sure social mobility was, er ... The way to get out of this ... or to raise social status was to become academically clever or you become good at sport ... you got out by sport. You became a good cricketer, a good rugby player, a good soccer player ... and you elevated or you became good at school, or you went to the technical college ... I knew ... see, when I ... the great thing in my life, once I got the drawing board under my arm and the trolleybus going to the technical college, I'd made it. I'd actually ... I knew I was on the upward grade and until I'd done that, er ... I was socially mobile, because that was the way everybody did it ...*

John was thus able to describe his home environment and early origins as 'fluid' in terms of mobility. He cited a number of 'rags-to-riches' and in some cases back to 'rags' again, stories of people he had known who had started in the mill and had become mill owners, or who begun by taking an apprenticeship and were now university lecturers with Ph.Ds. On the latter it is worth noting that John thought that going from a grammar school into an apprenticeship was quite common, although there were some exceptions who managed to get to the top of their field, but whom John considered 'failures'. Two such people were Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, the authors of a study of 88 working class children who went to grammar school in Huddersfield[8]. John had played rugby with these two, and knew several of the people they had interviewed:

> *Two or three years later I met Jackson and Marsden - I played rugby with them both - and I didn't realise they were sociologists or the fact that ... I knew they were at some university or other or had gone to ... but these were rare, totally rare beings because they went to the same school as my particular pals and my pals were far more successful than they were, but they got their apprenticeships. Now Jackson and Marsden probably failed on that.*

I prompted him further on this, and he continued:

> *It never dawned on us. You see we're in a different world. It was a ... um, if you read ... in fact if you read Jackson and Marsden's book, it reflects totally what I'm saying - people ... in my world, people started at the bottom and worked ... I mean, they say in the West Riding 'You start at the bottom, lad, and you worked yourself up until you became mill owner or top-dog', and I was convinced of this, no doubt about it. There was only one place to start, and that was at the bottom. And you didn't ... these people that started halfway up were failures, and I was brought up with this.*

There is some suggestion here that what John is describing may be peculiar to Huddersfield or the West Riding of Yorkshire - 'my world'. At another point he spelt this out a little more:

> *So it's a funny old world is Huddersfield. It's a peculiar place. It's a ... I don't ... there's social mobility, but social mobility is flexible in the place, it ... you know, people moved up and down and generations, you know ... It's not like Grimsby or probably Hull, I mean, you know ... I find this {Grimsby} a totally alien environment.*

John's own family reflected this 'fluid' and 'flexible' mobility, as did his wife's. Her father had been an apprentice in a factory, then taken a hotel which was 'a regular escape route' before returning to industry when that collapsed:

> *You see, her family ... again, we've the same social mobility. One relative was a dentist, another chap owned Standard Fireworks ... absolutely unbelievable, and her Dad worked a machine at David Brown's. There's no consistency within the Huddersfield area. You can't say to people 'You're so-and-so'. My relatives ranged full-range. I've got doctors right down to bus drivers in my cousin and relatives. Unbelievable - we're a total cross-section. But we don't ... I certainly don't look upon anybody as being anything different, you know. I just look at them as the fact that they've had the opportunity and seized it.*

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[8] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Education and the Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966)

This was not unique to his family, but applicable to the general community in which he lived, as he proceeded to talk about:

> *The village where I lived, it was a very tight village ... very, very ... because there wasn't very much difference between the workers and the bosses. There was a difference in money, but they could lose their money as easy as anything. Depression could bring a boss down into being a ...*

This would support what John said earlier about status being based on skills rather than money. He insisted that there was 'no materialistic grab' in the West Riding, and gave a number of accounts of different people to show how they were unaffected by money, many of whom - whether they inherited or saved it up - refused to spend it. But at one point in his interview, John did seem to contradict this:

> *But people did place a fair amount of money ... of value on what kind of brass you've got but people ... were notorious for living in hovels and having loads of money in the bank.*

Having illustrated this, John concluded:

> *Society in the West Riding, or that particular part of the West Riding crossed all barriers.*

However, before we leave this, we ought to point out an apparent exception - children of the 'professional' classes:

> *All my pals all went in ... um, not all of them. Pals of the grammar school I went to didn't. They went to ... most of their parents were doctors or solicitors and they all went to be doctors or solicitors, all bar me.*

And, at a later point, having said that 'everybody' took an apprenticeship, he added:

> *Those whose parents weren't ... now this is a distinction - if your parents were professional, if you were a doctor you can guarantee they went to be doctors, and if they were lawyers you could guarantee they went into the ...*

Finally, through the follow-up interview, I attempted to clarify John's self class image. I asked him whether being from the West Riding was more important than his social class origins:

> *Oh yes, yes. I mean, all Yorkshiremen are the same, aren't they? It's an exclusive club which we all belong to ... we are professional Yorkshiremen. We do nothing else but be Yorkshiremen.*

He confirmed that he thought this regional identity cut across social class differences which 'people tended to be not particularly bothered' about. So I asked him directly whether he saw himself as middle class:

> *No, I see myself as classless because sometimes my kind of thoughts are ... I varying between classes. I've various things which you would describe ... things I do which are certainly middle class ... I probably eat in a sort of middle class way - I like restaurants and I like the good life, and yet in a lot of ways I'm probably working class - I like tap-rooms in pubs. I like people who are involved in ... shall we say not as skilled or higher skilled ... I like to hear how they talk ...*

He was then asked whether his children would consider themselves as middle class, but he replied that his children 'don't consider themselves as anything - I don't think they're aware of class. I haven't brought them up in any way whatsoever to be aware of class'. However, it appears that John's ideas on 'starting at the bottom' have changed. He said that he would not want his children to have to start at the bottom:

> *You see, I'm probably the second generation which doesn't want them to start at the bottom. I won't have it to start at the bottom. I think I've wasted some ... a number of years of my life flogging it out from the bottom when I could have walked in probably half way up ... No, I'm not impressed with this business of starting at the ... I'm personally am not, having found out how difficult it is to rise from the bottom.*

Conclusion: A Comparative Analysis

Having spent some time analysing the class images of my two subjects, Eric and John, it is now necessary to bring out some of the comparative themes, by way of concluding this ethnographic project. The subjects were selected for study on the basis of their apparent similarities. They are moreorless of the same age, both male, both born in Yorkshire, both went to grammar school and then into an apprenticeship for five years in sheetmetal work, and after attendance at evening classes ending up with the same City and Guilds qualifications. They are both Lecturer IIs in further education, married with two teenage children, and living in middle class residential areas of Humberside. Of course, there are differences too. Eric was born in the east of the county of Yorkshire and John in the West Riding. Eric passed his Eleven-Plus, John failed his. Eric took an apprenticeship with a small private firm, John went to work for the local authority. For Eric's parents this was seen to be achieving their aspirations, whereas for John this was a source of disappointment, as they hoped that he would stay on at school and go to university. Eric served in the armed forces for two years before going moreorless straight into teaching, but John was rejected from National Service on medical grounds and spent a number of years in industry before entering teaching.

But from the point of view of this project, the most important similarities and differences are in terms of their respective social class imagery. Both introduced the notion of social class into their interviews quickly. Eric stated at the outset that he was from a working class family, but John left his social class origins rather more implicit, and with no little inconsistency. Indeed, he used the word 'traditional' in the opening of his first interview, which I mistakenly took to mean 'working class'. This was corrected in the follow-up interview:

> *I suppose you could say it fitted into what everybody's idea of the West Riding probably was.*

He proceeded to talk about mills, textiles, church and chapel and so on. In other words, 'traditional' was related to the locality or region rather than social class.

This is, in fact, in line with one of the major contrasts to emerge from the analysis of their social class imagery. For John it became evident that being a Yorkshireman, coming from the West Riding was all-important. But for Eric, coming from Yorkshire seemed quite unimportant, but coming from Hull was a little more significant, but not as much as his working class origins. John felt that regionalism cut across social class boundaries and barriers, which probably helps us to account for the rather inconsistent, more dynamic and fluid social structure that John perceives as contrasted with Eric's, which comes over as rather more rigid and fixed.

This image has obvious implications for their respective ideas on social mobility. Education was seen to be the most important agent of social mobility for Eric. This, too, was important for John, but he also gave emphasis to other possible mechanisms which facilitated social mobility, both upward and downward. Views on social mobility are invariably coloured by people's own starting position in the class structure, and it emerged - in spite of my original impressions, that they were not similar in this respect. Eric was obviously and objectively from the unskilled working class, whereas - at a minimum - John was from the skilled working class, if not the lower middle class. I feel this is very significant for understanding their social class imagery as revealed in this study. John was somewhat more reluctant than Eric to recognise people outside his won social group. He did see some of those worse off than himself, but was not only hesitant to say something about this, but admitted that he had not been aware of such inequalities when he was a child, and neither had he brought his own children up to be aware of social class differences. He also appeared to have some difficulty in identifying people better off than himself, playing down the significance of having money, except one fleeting reference to the 'wealthy', and mention of the children of 'the professional classes'. But on the whole such groups appeared to be outside his social vision, or his reference group.

A further difference between the social imagery of the two subjects is the emphasis given by John to social status rather than class as the prominent concept of stratification, so that for him, who you are is much more important than what you are, and that one's position in the social hierarchy is determined by skills or expertise one has. Interestingly, John subscribed to the belief that such skills were genetic - 'either you had it, or you didn't', 'in-built breeding', and that it was not possible to escape destiny. Eric also talked at some length about skills, But whereas for John status was dependent upon having expertise regardless of the nature of that expertise, Eric was rather more conscious of status differentiation between skills, that some were more socially valued than others. As a craft teacher, he was aware of the low status accorded his skills, and it was for this reason that Eric saw the need to acquire educational qualifications, since it was the qualifications not the skills themselves that carry the prestige. To a certain extent, John was also aware of status differentiation between skills, but he saw this in terms of scarcity value.

Both the respondents had comments to make about apprenticeships. For John, as we have seen, an apprenticeship was for many people the vehicle for social mobility. Whilst Eric would agree in principle to this, he would say that if the apprenticeship was in a small, local firm then opportunities for mobility would be limited, even though the manager of the firm he was apprenticed to had worked his way up from the shopfloor:

> *Although he was the boss, he was only the manager. He had worked on the shopfloor ... going back perhaps 20 years, and he'd held his post for perhaps 20 years. So he was still to an extent one of the boys in the workshop, but at the same time he was seen as being the manager who could lose someone their job presumably, who could give pay rises, who could do this ...*

When asked how this person might have got to this position, Eric said:

> *Being good at his job and also ... er, he certainly had the skills of management. I think he was a good manager.*

Had Eric not gone into teaching, he said that he could see himself as ending up in a similar position to this person, but in 'a larger firm' which would have provided him with 'more opportunity'. And whilst this perspective on apprenticeships may not be in disagreement with John's, Eric would add that we should not forget that an integral part of most apprenticeship schemes is the further education component - the opportunity to acquire educational and vocational qualifications.

Finally, having achieved social mobility, both John and Eric had things to say about housing as an indicator of social class or status. We have seen that John aspired quite early on in his working life to living in a detached property, which he clearly saw as a symbol of status. For Eric it was not so much the type of property but where that property was situated that was the indicator of social status or class.

Because of restrictions on word limits, I have not been able to pick up all the points of comparison between Eric and John, but only those which appear to be more significant as aspects of their respective social class imagery - and given their basic similarities, it is the differences that come over most markedly.

Epilogue: A Reflexive Account

I contacted Eric by telephone less than twenty-four hours before his first interview was carried out. He readily agreed to be interviewed, an he suggested coming to my office the following afternoon. Over the telephone, he did seem somewhat anxious and expressed some doubts as to whether he would give the 'right' answers. When he arrived, I offered him a cup of coffee, and we had a short chat about the course he was doing as a student. He was happy to allow the use of a tape recorder, which I placed in as an unobtrusive position as I could. I also took notes as an 'aide-memoire'. Once the interview began it was obvious that Eric knew what he was going to say, and his account came across as both structured and coherent - and he even paused at one point to invite me to ask him questions on what he had said up to that point. The interview lasted about an hour, and was very relaxed. At the end of the interview, Eric remarked that it had not been as bad as he thought it was going to be: 'Not as bad as going to the dentist after all'. The second interview was carried out about two weeks later, and this one lasted only half-an-hour. In the meantime I had interviewed John and listened to the first interviews again, and so was able to direct the second interview rather more as I had a list of areas I wanted to probe. So the second interview enabled me to collect the data I was looking for quickly and economically.

The first interview had been arranged a week beforehand. The only convenient time for both of us was after our respective evening classes which were on the same night and in the same centre. Because of his ritual of going to the pub after his class, the interview was carried out in the subject's own home, and did not begin until after 11.00 pm. The actual interview was delayed somewhat as I had to be introduced to members of John's family. The interview began with John's dog in the room, and it was only later that I realised it had been sniffing at the built-in microphones of the tape recorder, which I had discretely placed out of immediate vision. At one point in the interview the dog began to bark, and in order to keep it quiet John gave it a biscuit to eat. All these background noises made the tape difficult to transcribe. It was not helped by the fact that, unlike Eric, John spoke neither clearly nor coherently, and would often leave sentences unfinished. He certainly did not seem to have given much prior thought to what he was going to say, and he proceeded in a largely unsystematic fashion through his biography. Because of the late hour, I found concentration difficult, though I took notes in order to help me with this. But it was only upon subsequent hearings of the tape recording that I realised just how much I had missed, and I had left far too many points to cover in the second interview which took place a fortnight later. This time it was held immediately after the evening classes in the centre, before going to the pub. This inevitably meant that I was under some pressure to keep it brief, but as it happened, I need not have worried unduly about this as I soon realised that I had come with very little cassette tape available to record the interview. Conscious of this, I directed the interview much more than I would have wished, in order to cover as many areas of interest as I could before the tape ran out. As this happened quite quickly, I had to rely on taking notes for data collection. Both interviews with John were relaxed, especially the first. He also offered me a good deal of documentary evidence, such as photographs, local history books, newspaper clippings, and even a drawer full of old bills, invoices and cheques that he had hoarded. Perhaps had this project been longer and more systematic, I would have been able to make use of this material, but as it was I had more than enough data to work with.

To begin the analysis of the data, I played through the tapes several times checking my notes at the same time. I did begin to transcribe the first one, but after 12 pages of notes and I was only a quarter of the way through the first interview, I abandoned this and worked directly from the tapes. My handwritten notes proved to be very useful as an aid to finding my way around the data, so that I could relatively easily find the relevant quotes. But it did seem a pity that so much of the data recorded was ultimately going to be discarded because of lack of space or because it did not appear to be directly related to social class imagery. I have tried to make as much use of the data as I could within the given word limits, but this is both one of the strengths and problems of the life history method. It is a strength because it succeeds in capturing the 'full flavour of the speech of the people, the slang, the nuances, the hesitations, the laughter and the tears'[9]. But this has the problem of how such data are to be organised and presented. I found the organisation of the data a real problem because it was not always presented in as systematic and organised fashion as I might have wished, and in any case, as they thought I was looking for something else, what organisation there was, was directed to presenting accounts of the process of becoming college lecturers. The main difficulty was in avoiding repetition, particularly as so many of the themes generated appeared to be interlinked. A more serious problem, one pointed out by Howard Becker[10], customs and traditions in sociological research conspire against such qualitative research insofar as, for example, journal articles and graduate dissertations and theses have word limits, and to provide ethnographic descriptive data could well take up a high proportion of the permissible length before the analysis even begins. However, in spite of the unwieldy nature of the data generated, and the risk of transgressing set word limits, the use of theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method show how emergent ideas can begin to be developed into a model. The basis of the model in this comparative analysis is built around the following variables:

HOME BACKGROUND:	Family, housing and community
EDUCATION:	Attitudes of parents; the Eleven-Plus; going to grammar school; part-time further education; education and social mobility; in-service education
WORK:	Apprenticeship; early work experience; reasons for job changes; attitudes to work
GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY:	Local roots; 'Yorkshiremen'
IMAGES OF SOCIAL CLASS:	Family, friends, education, occupation, wealth, housing
GENERAL ATTITUDES:	Discipline, religion, politics, education and deference

The way such models will have to be formalised and tested is through analytic induction, attempting to check the validity of the descriptions and explanations put forward, and to examine the contradictions and emergent patterns that could be tested out in subsequent research, using larger sample and - perhaps - more quantitative techniques.

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[9] Oscar Lewis, *La Vida* (London: Panther Modern Society, 1968); p. 25

[10] Howard Becker, 'Introduction' to Clifford R. Shaw, *The Jack Roller* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); p. vii

APPENDIX: DOING LIFE HISTORIES - Some Practical Notes

1. Before deciding to use the life history method of data collection, think carefully whether it will produce the kind of data you require. Remember - it will generate qualitative data, although through coding, statistical analyses are possible.

2. In reaching your decision, you should also consider alternative strategies to ensure that no other method would be better suited to your purpose. Life history research can be time-consuming - some life history projects are carried out over a period of several years. Remember also that the life history method is not exclusive - it may be used in conjunction with other methods, such as participant observation, interviews or even questionnaires.

3. Having made the decision to use this method, you will have to consider your 'sample' size. Would it be preferable to study just one person in depth, to provide an intensive, comprehensive narrative? Or, would it be better to collect multiple biographies? Neither of these strategies are likely to satisfy the criteria for external validity, but both have points in their favour. As a case study, the former may be the most useful for bringing together theory and practice. The latter would make it possible to draw out the main themes, to generalise to one type by focusing on common elements across the biographies.

4. How are the 'sample' to be selected? Do you know of any suitable subjects to approach initially? (If so, you should reflect on why you consider them 'suitable' - this might reveal any preconceived notions you might have about the phenomena under study). If you do not have any initial subjects in mind, the you will need to think about how you will go about making contact, and introducing yourself and your project. Remember, with this approach it is not just a case of asking a few quick questions and then disappearing. You will have to establish rapport, and almost certainly will find yourself having to make several visits, since you are unlikely to obtain all the data you need in one session.

5. Think about asking your subjects for their autobiographies. This, of course, will not be feasible in all cases, and has an important limitation - that of actually getting subjects to write down their life stories. If time is short, this may be an important consideration.

6. If you do ask subjects for their autobiographies, you will then need to consider giving them advice on how to approach the task. This might vary from a relatively informal unstructured approach - perhaps by imposing no limits or constraints, but merely suggesting that they start at the beginning and include anything they consider relevant - to a more formal, structured questionnaire-like approach, giving a series of headings, if not actual detailed questions.

For example, let us assume that you are interested in studying people who become Open University students. Having contacted some of them and persuaded them to write their autobiographies (and at least Open University students are used to writing!), you might merely suggest that they describe how they came to study with the Open University, and then leave it to them to decide how far back they go, and how much detail to provide. Alternatively, you might suggest that they write under the following headings:

a. Home background
b. Compulsory schooling
    i) context of schooling
    ii) classroom activities
    iii) teachers
    iv) discipline and control
    v) examinations and assessment
c. Leaving school/ transition to work
d. Continuing education
e. Wider view of education
f. Open University experience.

Or, you might wish to go one stage further and break down these headings into list of stimulus questions. The above list of headings is derived from an Open University course unit, 'Education through autobiography' (E200 *Contemporary Issues in Education*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1981), written by Peter Barnes, who asks a total of 134 questions under these headings:

Questions	1-27	Context of Schooling
	28-31	Classroom Activity
	32-42	Teachers
	43-51	Discipline and Control
	52-69	Examinations and Assessment
	70-78	Home and School
	79-93	Leaving School
	94-122	A Wider View of Education
	123-132	Continuing Education
	133-134	The Open University

7. Using the written biographies approach, remember that there is no reason why you should not follow up the autobiographies with interviews, which would enable you to explore in more depth any points made in the autobiography. Indeed, this is likely to be necessary in some cases where the biographical material provided is rather sketchy. The follow-up interview is to be encouraged, since not only does it generate more life history data, but enables the researcher to check the reliability of the data provided in the autobiography.

8. If, however, the oral method of data collection is used, it would be most sensible to use a tape recorder rather than either trying to take notes or reconstruct the interview afterwards. Neither option to the tape recorder will be satisfactory in the case of life history research. If one anticipates some difficulty with the subject agreeing to the use of a tape recorder, it is suggested that you act as if this were the natural thing to do, and if you detect any signs of hostility, fear or whatever, say 'I do hope you don't mind me using this?'. If the subject is worried, then it will be necessary to explain the importance of accurate reporting, and how many people feel uneasy about the presence of a tape recorder, but soon cease to be aware of it once the research is under way. An

unobtrusive microphone is helpful (but built-in microphones can create difficulties during the transcription stage).

9. Using the oral method, there are again a number of strategies which can be employed, ranging from the structured to the unstructured. That is, one might employ the same list of questions that might be used as a questionnaire. Or, the subject might be permitted to talk with very little intervention on the part of the researcher, except to encourage the respondent to proceed, to expand, to reiterate, to change direction. etc. This latter strategy suggests that the subject leads the interview rather than the interviewer. Invariably, this will mean that the sequence or order of the life history will have to be reconstructed during the analysis stage, perhaps with the guidance of the subject who would be able to give advice on the sequence of events.

10. At this stage, you should reflect on the ways in which you - as the researcher - have had an influence on the structure and content of the life history material. This influence will be more obvious if you have used a structured approach. But do not forget that you will also be imposing yourself on the data in the way you edit and order the material during the analysis and the writing up.

11. Ensure that the data analysis stage runs parallel to the data collection stage. Do not collect all your data before you begin to think about how to analyse the data, or you may find that the data you have got is inadequate for following up particular themes and issues, or that you have collected a good deal of irrelevant data which will have to be discarded.

12. .The way you decide to write up the material may well be determined by your original choice of strategy, since this will have influenced the kind of data you end up with. For example, if you collect data for a single biography, then the narrative followed by commentary would be the most obvious way of organising the data. For multiple biographies, you will have to examine the data for common themes and issues which will be the basis of discussion. illustrated with extracts from the life stories themselves.

13. As far as reliability is concerned, you must ensure the accuracy of the recording and transcription of data. In editing material, you will need to guard against distorting the meanings and significance attached to events by the subjects. This is particularly intended to draw your attention to the possibility of taking quotes out of context and thereby misrepresenting the intentions of the subject. Although you should always respect the subject's desire for confidentiality and anonymity, you should be careful that this concern does not lead to distortion (that is, do not change facts and details even if they might lead to the identification of the subject).

14. The problem of external validity must be dealt with. The basic rule must be to avoid making any kind of unwarranted generalisations or claims to representativeness, particularly if your 'sample' is very small. Instead, argue your position with the logic of theoretical sampling.

15. Finally, do not forget that the life history method can be supplemented through the use of other research methods. Observation, or just 'hanging around' the subjects might be productive; meeting and talking to friends and relatives might be useful. Such observation requires the accurate and systematic recording of notes - keep a notebook/diary for this purpose during the duration of the project. Ask if the subject has any diaries, letters, school books or reports, photograph albums or any other 'relics of the past' that you could be permitted to examine. Any information thus derived must, of course, be accurately recorded, and only used with the permission of the subject.

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1. METHODOLOGY

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'Life History Grid for Adolescents'
SOCIAL WORK, vol.25, no.4, July 1980; pp. 321-322

Presents a graphic means of eliciting the life history of an adolescent during an initial interview. The grid summarises chronological facts about the client, and is useful for both the social agency and the adolescent him/herself.

Armstrong, Paul F.
TAKING KNOWLEDGE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF MEDITATION AND THE DIVINE LIGHT MISSION
Ph.D Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Essex, 1977; 374 pp.

See under SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Becker, Howard
'Introduction' to Clifford R.Shaw, THE JACK ROLLER
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1966; pp. v-xviii

In providing an introduction to the methodology of Clifford Shaw's classic study of Stanley in the 1920s, Becker provides a thorough overview of the uses and value of the life history method, particularly as used by the early Chicago School, and he recommends that the method be further developed and more widely used.

Bertaux, Daniel (ed)
BIOGRAPHY AND SOCIETY: THE LIFE HISTORY APPROACH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
Sage, Beverly Hills, California, 1981; 309 pp.

This collection of seventeen articles focuses on the epistemological and methodological issues involved in using the life history approach, as well as giving a number of examples of its use, both for contemporary and historical research, to show what can be done with life stories in the context of sociological research. In part the book is the result of a meeting of an *Ad Hoc Group in The Life History Approach* in the *IXth World Congress of Sociology* in Upsaala, August 1978. Thirteen of the chapters are from that meeting, with a further four invited contributions. The book outlines the past use of the method and its potential for the future. The aim of the book is to present a first sample of the growing new wave of sociological works using life stories, coming from diverse theoretical backgrounds from symbolic interactionism to various versions of Marxism, and from disciplines outside sociology. such as social psychology and historical sociology. One key theoretical issue which runs implicitly through most of the papers is the connectioon between individual and social dynamics and historical change: what is the relationship between individual and collective praxis and socio-historical change?

Blum. Zahava D et. al.
A METHOD FOR THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF RETROSPECTIVE LIFE HISTORIES. REPORT No. 48
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1969; 37 pp.

To achieve the goal of 'equality of opportunity' and socio-economic well being in American society there is the need to know what type of directed social change is appropriate. The purpose of this research effort was to examine empirical data on how social groups and individual households achieve social mobility in order to identify alternative identification points. Social mobility is seen primarily in socio-economic terms with a strong but not exclusive, emphasis on the role played by educational attainments in the mobility of individual households and social groups. A current emphasis of our research is an investigation of the occurrence (or lack of occurrence) of certain events as the individual passes through his own life cycle, i.e. a study of intergenerational mobility.. Using survey research methods, retrospective life histories have been obtained for a national sample of the non-institutionalised population of males aged 30 to 39 years of age residing in households in the United States and a similar sample of Negro males. This paper, while not intended to be a comprehensive manual, discusses the general approach developed in the project.

Bogdan, Robert (ed)
BEING DIFFERENT: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JANE FRY
John Wiley and Son, New York, 1974; 235 pp.

See under SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Bossard, J.H.S.
THE LARGE FAMILY SYSTEM: AN ORIGINAL STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILY BEHAVIOUR
University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1956; 325 pp.

See under ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Breen, Myles and Corcoran, Farrel
'The Myth of Discourse'
Paper presented to Annual Meeting of the Central States Speech Association, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 15-17, 1982; 41 pp.

Reflecting the ideas of Roland Barthes, this paper examines the nature and importance of myth as a type of speech. The investigation proceeds by discussing myth from the perspectives of both traditional and contemporary disciplines, then considers the universality of myth, its religious impulse, and its functions. Using examples from television news coverage (the Iranian crisis) and popular culture (other television programming, such as soap operas and situation comedies like "All in the Family", and the John Wayne myth), the paper delineates several functions of myth: (1) to interpret and fit unfamiliar situations into old symbolic moulds; (2) to create exemplary models for a whole society by translating a single life-history into an archetype; (3) to construct a 'language of argument', whereby conflict is presented and mediated, such as the resolution of contemporary social problems in the science fiction series 'Star Trek'; and (4) to organise reality, history, and experience into recognisable patterns. The paper also examines the ways in which culture, myth, ritual, and ideology are entwined, and postulates the effects of challenging myths, creating myths, and destroying myths (demythologising). In this last respect, and noting that myths must be unrecognised as being such to be potent, the paper questions the role of the communication scholar in exposing myths to public scrutiny.

Burgess, Robert G (ed)
FIELD RESEARCH: A SOURCEBOOK AND FIELD MANUAL
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; 286 pp.

A collection of 34 articles on qualitative research strategies, including essays on life histories by Cottle, Burgess and Mandelbaum.

Burgess, Robert G.
'Personal Documents, Oral Sources and Life Histories' in
Robert G. Burgess (ed), FIELD RESEARCH: A SOURCEBOOK AND FIELD MANUAL
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; pp. 131-135

Mainly about oral history, but does briefly review the use of the life history in anthropology and sociology, and raises questions about reliability, typicality and representativeness. Attention is directed to evidence for the favourable use of the life history method in the subjective assessment of institutional processes, and providing participants' accounts, and help examine social processes and generate new questions. He concludes that further work is required in this area before we can assess the utility of life histories.

Butler, Lorna M and Howell, Robert E
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES: COPING WITH GROWTH
Co-operative Extension Service, Western Rural Development Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon. 1980. 23 pp.

Designed to help local government officials, agency personnel, and members of community groups involved in the planning process for a rapidly growing community, this introduction to community needs assessment provides background information on the reasons for conducting community needs assessment, guidelines for determining which techniques are most appropriate, and a brief description of 13 different needs assessment techniques. Advantages and disadvantages of each method are given plus a list of references. The techniques include the use of census and vital statistics, content analysis, participant observation, case studies, social network analysis, surveys, key informants, life histories, nominal group process, delphi technique, advisory groups and task forces, community forums, and community impressions. Although a community needs assessment is an excellent means of involving the public in problem-solving and developing local goals, the guide stresses the need to use multiple methods when carrying out a needs assessment - or many people, and potential problem areas will fall through the slats. A brief, closing example illustrates how needs assessment techniques were used in Creston, Washington.

Carr-Hill, Roy A. and MacDonald, K I
'Problems in the Analysis of Life Histories' in Paul Halmos (ed), STOCHASTIC PROCESSES IN SOCIOLOGY
Sociological Review Monograph 19, University of Keele, July 1973; pp. 57-95

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate some of the problems in the quantitative analysis of life history data. Described as 'work in progress', it seeks to develop adequate tools (conceptual and computational) for the handling of sociological life histories, which are as yet unavailable. Despite technical sophistication, it has yet to be demonstrated that such work that has been done is sociologically relevant. These tools are largely quantitative and uses job history information for 4207 male respondents aged 20 and over from the Government Social Survey/London School of Economics 1949 Study, and a collection of careers oof previous court experiences of about 2,500 offenders, all of whom appeared in selected Quarter Sessions in 1963. These data are used for illustrative purposes in trying to analyse life history material through graphical devices (career scattergrams), cluster analysis, and the use of multivariate analysis.

Cavan, Ruth S
'Interviewing for Life History Material'
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY
vol.35, no.1, 1929; pp. 100-115

The interview as a method of obtaining life history material stands midway between the uncontrolled diary or autobiography and the formal rating scale or test. Interviewing varies according to the purpose for which data are sought and according to the philosophy of the interviewer: thus the psychoanalyst seeks different information from that sought by the sociologist. A survey of methods used by numerous investigators shows there is considerable uniformity in the practice of holding interviews in private, in a quiet place, preferably an office. There is a great variety of opinion concerning desirable qualities and attitudes of a good interviewer: respect for the interviewee, helpfulness, non-critical, impersonal, and sympathetic attitudes are most frequently mentioned. Methods of handling the interview include techniques for controlling the interview, the comfort of the interviewee, making friendly contacts, giving the interviewee confidence, securing spontaneous response, and so on. Printed schedules may be found for complete life histories and for securing life history material on special types of experiences. On some phases of life history investigations little data can be found, notably on analysing the life history material after it is obtained.

Cavan, Ruth S, Hauser, Philip M and Stouffer, Samuel A
'Note on the Statistical Treatment of Life History Material'
SOCIAL FORCES vol.9, no. 1, October 1930; pp. 200-203; reprinted in N.K.Denzin (ed), SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS: A SOURCE BOOK, Butterworths, London, 1970; pp. 436-441

The authors write brief notes on how to analyse a large number of life history documents, and deal with the problem of objectivity of narratives. They used a number of judges to interpret documents independently, and to measure the degree if agreement between the judges. Using 600 documents collected from college students on the basis of a questionnaire and a life history, they examined the degree of consensus in interpretation and analysis between judges. It is noted that this consensus does not meant that this is a check on the validity of life histories themselves. They doubt the economy, though not the possibility, of using the life history method in doing this kind of work. They do not deny the importance of the method, for it is seen to be able to supply insights, hunches and clues.

Cottle, Thomas J
'The Life Study: On Mutual Recognition and the Subjective Inquiry'
URBAN LIFE AND CULTURE, vol. 2, no.3, October 1973; pp. 344-360; reprinted in
Robert G. Burgess (ed), FIELD RESEARCH: A SOURCEBOOK AND FIELD MANUAL
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; pp. 123-127

Describes how he researches families in poor neighbourhoods in Boston, building on long-term friendships and conversations. No questionnaire was used, and conversations were allowed to follow their own course. Neither was a tape recorder used. Rather, the author either took notes during the conversation, or afterwards. Typically, these conversations were held on a weekly basis with subjects, and lasted approximately one to two hours each time, in order to get the life history data. The writing about the family would not begin until about two years after commencing the visits. The author discusses the reasons why he chose the families he did, recognising that the selection did not fulfil the normal criteria of validity in social science research.

Denzin, Norman K
'Introduction to Part X: The Life History Method' in Norman K. Denzin (ed),
SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS: A SOURCE BOOK
Butterworths, London, 1970; pp. 415-418

The editor of the book writes a briefer version of his chapter in *The Research Act in Sociology* as an introduction to Part X of this edited book, in order to outline the main features of the life history method, as an introduction to the papers which are contained in this section, which include the article by Cavan et. al. on the statistical analysis of life history data, and extracts from Shaw's *The Jack Roller* and Becker's 'Introduction' to the 1966 edition.

Denzin, Norman K
THE RESEARCH ACT IN SOCIOLOGY: A THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS
McGraw-Hill, New York, 1978, 2nd. ed. 370 pp.

This is a general text on the use of qualitative research methodology. Chapter 8 (pp. 214-255) is specifically concerned with the life history method. The author begins by defining different types of life histories (such as 'topical' and 'edited'), sources of data, guidelines for its collection and analysis (using analytic induction), issues related to sampling, validity as well as discussing the current status of the method and its role in contemporary sociology. The author takes this further by extending the approach as a comparative method.

Dollard, John
'The Life History Method in Community Studies'
AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, vol.3, no.5, 1938; pp. 724-737

Following its use by Thomas and Znaniecki, Dollard argues for the use of the life history method in community studies, especially for exploratory purposes. The life history can assist in identifying the most relevant factors of community life. An illustration is provided of a thirty-year-old informant to show how this method can produce data on emotional forces in society, and to discriminate the difference in degree and type of participation within specific community groups by different individuals.

Dollard, John
CRITERIA FOR THE LIFE HISTORY
Yale University Press, New Haven, Conneticut, 1933; reprinted 1949; 288 pp.

This is a major attempt to provide some theoretical underpinning for the use of life history data. Dollard formulated seven criteria for the study of life histories, of which the first six stipulate in various ways that the subject must be understood in his or her own social and cultural context. The seventh - that life history material must be organised and conceptualised - is seen as the crucial criterion since life history material does not speak for itself. But the book does not offer very much advice as to how this organisation and conceptualisation can be done.

Faraday, Annabel and Plummer, Ken
'Doing Life Histories'
SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, vol. 27, no. 4, 1979; pp. 773-798

Having briefly reviewed the history of the use of the life history, the authors consider four issues: (1) Social Science problems - the justification of the life history technique; (2) Technical problems - how the data is collected and analysed; (3) Ethical and Political problems - commitment questions of social research, concerning the morality and politics of research; and (4) Personal problems - the problems for the researcher in carrying out life history research. These issues are discussed in relation to the authors' own research from within the symbolic interactionist perspective on sexuality. Whilst not 'perfect', the life history should be recognised as a 'major sociological tool'.

Feild, Hubert S
'Predicting Women's College Experiences from Life History Data: A Four-Year Study'
RESEARCH INTO HIGHER EDUCATION
vol. 5, no.2, 1976; pp. 125-140

See under WOMEN

Fischer, Lucy R
'Sociology and Life History: Methodological Incongruence?'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol.4, no.1, February 1983; pp 29-40

Life history data are especially useful in sociological analysis because the narratives are concrete, contain detailed information, can trace connections between life events, and give access to the interpretations of the individuals involved. Illustrations from research on mothers and daughters are provided.

Frazier, Charles E
'The Use of Life-Histories in Testing Theories of Criminal Behaviour: Toward Reviving a Method'
QUALITATIVE SOCIOLOGY, vol. 1, 1978; pp. 122-142

This paper traces the history of the life-history method from its heyday in the 1930s through the works following that period. General methodological discussions ensue which draw out the strengths of the life history method. Validity is high since the life-history is second order data to participant observation, and reliability can be improved for all methods by checking other sources. Conclusions from a life-history are generalisable when the subject is archetypal. The question of standards for interpretation is posed. Finally the question of theory testing is addressed.

Gibson, Margaret A and Arvizu, Steven F
DEMYSTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
Monograph II, Bilingual Education Training Series, Cross-Cultural Resource Center, California State University, Sacramento, 1978; 67 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Goodson, Ivor
'Life Histories and the Study of Schooling'
INTERCHANGE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY,
vol.11, no.4, 1980-81; pp. 62-76

Life history data of educators should be analysed for research purposes. The focus should be changed from an obsession with specific events and statistical data to a much broader historical sweep. Life history investigations set against the background of teaching patterns should provide an antidote to depersonalised accounts of schooling.

Goodson, Ivor
SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND CURRICULUM CHANGE
Croom Helm, London, 1982; 212 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Goodson, Ivor
'History, Context and Qualitative Methods in the Study of Curriculum' in Robert G. Burgess (ed), STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE METHODS
Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 121-151

See under EDUCATION

Graham, Hilary
'Surveying through Stories'
in Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (eds), SOCIAL RESEARCHING: POLITICS, PROBLEMS, PRACTICE
Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984; pp. 104-124

The author claims that stories are a good means of collecting material for social research. Survey research occupies a central but highly ambiguous position within contemporary sociology, being 'masculinist', but has provided empirical data on which a feminist critique of this sociological tradition has been constructed. Graham does not reject the survey approach, but suggests that interviewers who are too interventionist in the research process tend to get brief, stilted and unhelpful answers. Drawing on the research which she has done on the experience of early motherhood, she explores the use of narrative in survey research, arguing that such a device can be used to overcome the tendency to 'fracture women's experiences' through a more structured 'question-and-answer' approach. The narrative style is particularly prominent within the life history method.

Johnson, Malcolm
'Medical Careers: a Biographical Approach'
Paper delivered to British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Owens Park, University of Manchester, April 1976; 21 pp.

Focuses on the concept of career, and argues that it is limited by being confined to its occupational sense, leading to a neglect of many activities which have definite histories and to the narrow interpretation of those activities which have been given the career label. Comparisons are made with historical studies, research on social change and ageing, indicating further possibilities for the career approach. The emphasis is on the mapping of the issues in an emergent debate about the relative value of subjective and retrospective life history accounts, in the context of studying processual activities, especially as they relate to medical careers. It is suggested that by compiling primarily subjective accounts of multiple career lines it will be possible to produce more authentic interpretations of the events in a given career.

Karweit, Nancy
LIFE HISTORY DATA ON OCCUPATIONAL EFFECTS OF OBTAINING EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS THROUGH ALTERNATE ROUTES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1976; 168 pp.

This project report describes the process used to convert retrospective life history data collected in 1969 at the Center for Social Organization of Schools at the John Hopkins University to a more usable form, the writing and testing of computer storage and retrieval programs for the data, and the initial interpretation of data relating to lifelong educational patterns of men. Part 1 provides a description of the unique characteristics of life history data and an explanation of the logic behind the storage and retrieval system. Part 2 contains the documentation for the computer tape including descriptions of each of the fifteen life history variables. Part 3 explains the use of the life history Sample Retrieval Program. Part 4 describes the rates, incidence and duration of educational activities for men in the Life History Sample, including the relationships of relevant background factors and occupational patterns.

Karweit, Nancy
'Storage and Retrieval of Life History Data'
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH, vol.2, 1973; pp. 41-50

Recently many social scientists have begun collection and analysis of life history data. The analysis of these data is made possible largely because of appropriate computer storage and retrieval techniques. These techniques differ in several aspects from the conventional procedures employed in most social science research. The paper discusses some alternate methods for storage of these data and suggests some general capabilities for a retrieval system for life-history data.

Klockars, Charles B
'Field Ethics for the Life History' in Robert S. Weppner (ed)
STREET ETHNOGRAPHY: SELECTED STUDIES OF CRIME AND DRUG USE IN NATURAL SETTINGS
Sage, London, 1977; pp. 201-226

An account of the ethical dimensions of doing life history research, based on the author's experiences of researching for *The Professional Fence*, a study of white collar crime. The author does not claim that his central character and himself as researcher were ethical exemplars, but examples for others to learn from.

Lacey, Roderic
'... No Other Voice Can Tell: Life Histories in Melanesia'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY,
vol.5, no.1, February 1984; pp.5-35

One task facing persons who would employ oral sources for writing and teaching the history of the Pacific is the use of testimonies from Pacific Islanders. Discusses issues that should be taken into consideration: memory, testimony as performance, teller as hero, and testimony as conversational narrative.

Leonard, Raymond E.
TEN YEARS ON: A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT OPEN UNIVERSITY 'A' STUDENTS ATTACHED TO A LOCAL STUDY CENTRE
MA Dissertation, University of Hull, 1980; 120 pp.

See under ADULT EDUCATION

Lewis, Oscar
THE CHILDREN OF SANCHEZ: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MEXICAN FAMILY
Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1964; 507 pp.

See under ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Mandlebaum, David G.
'The Study of Life History: Gandhi'
CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY, vol.14, no.3, June 1973; pp. 177-196; extracts reprinted in Robert G. Burgess (ed), FIELD RESEARCH: A SOURCEBOOK AND FIELD MANUAL
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; pp. 146-151

Using Gandhi's life history as a vehicle, the author illustrates the value of life history studies for anthropology and the social sciences, and in the process traces the historical development of the use of the method in both anthropology and sociology, before giving procedural advice on how to use the method in chronological order: (i) dimensions or aspects of a person's life; (ii) principal turnings and the life conditions between turnings; and (3) person's characteristic means of adaption.

Misztal, Bronislaw
'Autobiographies, Diaries, Life Histories and Oral Histories of Workers as a Source of Socio-historical Knowledge'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol.2, no.3, November 1981; pp. 181-194

Analyses of Polish workers' diaries, oral histories and other primary sources illustrate problems of obtaining objective information. The author proposes a new system for reaching valid historical conclusions when using these kinds of materials.

Morin, Francoise
'Anthropological Praxis and Life History'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol.3, no.1, February 1982; pp. 5-30

Outlines the ways that the life history method (based on autobiographical interviews) has been used in anthropology. Debates among French anthropologists on the method's validity are discussed. A study using life histories to examine the social functions of an Occitan language revival among French peasants is described.

Mumford, Michael D. and Owen, William A.
'Life History Dimensions and Types between Age 18 and 30'
Paper presented to 29th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association,
Atlanta, March 23-26, 1983

Inherent limitations on the feasibility of experimentation have made it difficult for investigators to formulate an adequate understanding of individuality as a psychological phenomenon. Recently, Fiske (1979) and Sontag (1971) have suggested that application of longitudinal or developmental strategy might be of some use in remedying this difficulty. A longitudinal study of individuality was carried out through the use of three scored autobiographical data forms tuned to particular developmental periods. Between the ages of 18 and 30, 415 males and 358 females, participated in three assessments in which they responded to 281 life history biodata items. Subsequently, the item data collected over this developmental period for each sex group were entered into separate principal component analyses, and scores on the resulting components formed the basis for a set of Ward and Hook subgroupings. The fifteen male subgroups and the seventeen female subgroups generated an 84 percent and 86 percent classification ratio for the two sex groups. Examination of the subgroups' differential characteristics and a number of subsidiary analyses indicated that the various male and female subgroups met the requirements for the formation of robust and powerful developmental typologies. A marked similarity to the types identified by Block (1971) was noted along with certain other conclusions which flowed from the types' differential characteristics. A series of eleven tables, which provide detailed data analyses, is appended.

Plummer, Ken
DOCUMENTS OF LIFE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEMS AND LITERATURE OF A HUMANISTIC METHOD
George Allen & Unwin, London, 1983; 175 pp.

This book is concerned with the use in social science research of life histories and other types of personal documents which give a first hand account of social experience from the participants' point of view. Such materials are invaluable for providing evidence about the subjective point of view of the social actor, and are congruent with a theoretical approach in terms of action theory or an action frame of reference. The use of personal documents has a long history, which this book traces back to the Chicago School and some of its classic studies, such as Thomas and Znaniecki's *Polish Peasant in Europe and America.* Thereafter, for various reasons which this book discusses, the method fell into general disuse. The use of personal documents, however, has in recent years enjoyed a modest revival, and has been extended to fields other than crime, deviance and urban ethnography in which it originally developed. This book takes this revival further, providing an overview of the strengths and limitations of such accounts of social experience together with a discussion of the practical problems of collecting and analysing such data.

Polanksy, N
'How Shall a Life History be Written?'
CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY, vol. 9, 1941; pp.188-207

Life history is defined as a verbal technique for comprehensively representing a concrete person. Three subjects were presented in six types of short life histories. These life histories were read by a group of judges who gave subjective opinions about the samples, and made certain objective predictions about the subject in each sample. The understanding of the subject produced by any given sample was measured by its success in leading to correct predictions. For predictive success, the most efficient brief life history seems to be that from the structural point of view, followed by the cultural, genetic, episodic presentation and the individual differences approach. Least efficient is description of the major maladjustment. Differences in subjective reactions to various modes were related to the mode's designed characteristics - finding the structural the most interesting and individual differences the least. They regarded as most unified the major maladjustment, and least unified, the individual differences or psychometric approach. A person's predictability is at least in part determined by whether he or she is typical of their own and the judge's culture. The judge's psychological training and their similarity to the subject in sex and age help in making predictions about the subject. There is evidence that some subjects may be less predictable than others, and that they differ in their susceptibility to a given mode of presentation. Of the three factors involved in correct predictions, it appears that efficiency of the mode is most important, next is the predictability of the subject, and least is the capacity of the judge.

Ramsoy, Natalie R. and Clausen, Sten E
'Events as Units of Analysis in Life History Studies'
A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF OF LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCE: REPORT ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL'S CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS, October 1977, Part IV
Social Science Research Council, Washington DC Center for Co-ordination of Research on Social Indicators, 1978

One of the papers presented to the Conference on the National Longitudinal Survey of Labour Market Experience, which is concerned with analysing variation in labour market behaviour with emphasis on policy-relevant research issues, which argues for the use of the life history method as one of the methodological strategies.

Ryant, Carl
'Academic Oral History: Life Review in Spite of Itself'
Paper delivered to 36th Annual Scientific Meeting of Gerontological Society, San Francisco, Nov 17-22, 1983

The process and content of the life review should not be separated from the creation of an oral history. Several projects undertaken at the University of Louisville Oral History Center support the therapeutic aspects of reminiscence. The dichotomy between oral history, as an historical database, and life review, as a therapeutic exercise, breaks down in actual practice. Each exercise contributes to the others' function. In the 31 oral histories taken at the Louisville Courier Journal and the 44 oral histories taken at the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, both individual and group life reviews were at work. The participants reviewed their own life cycles and the life cycle of their employing companies. In both oral history and life review, the process and product can be useful to historians and gerontologists.

Sarris, Jean
'Vicissitudes of Intensive Life History Research'
PERSONNEL AND GUIDANCE JOURNAL, vol.56, no.5, 1978;
pp. 269-272

The author describes her struggles with the issues involved in doing intensive life history research. She was investigating the process of maturation of children who grew up in the San Francisco public housing projects and were able to develop sufficient psychological strength to avoid common problems of project life.

Sitton, Thad
'Oral Life History: From Tape Recorder to Typewriter'
SOCIAL STUDIES, vol.73, no.3, May-June 1981; pp. 120-126

Offers a rationale for oral history projects and details procedures for documenting oral histories. The oral history project involves students in field work in their own communities and develops interpersonal and academic skills. Procedures include locating a suitable memoirist, conducting the initial interview, tape analysis and follow-up interviews, and transcribing and editing.

Smith, Louis M et. al.
INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION. KENSINGTON REVISITED: A FIFTEEN YEAR FOLLOW-UP OF AN INNOVATIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND ITS FACULTY. VOLUME VI - CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THE INTERSECT OF THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, HISTORICAL METHODS AND LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH. FINAL REPORT.
Graduate Institute of Education, Washington University, St. Louis, 1983; 370 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Sobell, Linda C and Sobell, Mark B
'Validity of Self-Reports in Three Populations of Alcoholics'
JOURNAL OF CONSULTING AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
vol. 46, no. 5, October 1978; pp. 901-907

Examined whether population type and question type differentially affected validity of alcoholic's self-reports. Alcoholics gave highly valid self-reports. Question type differentially affected the validity of subjects' interview answers, as fewer invalid answers were given to demographic questions. Population type did not significantly affect validity of self-reported life history information.

Starry, Allan P
PREDICTION OF RELIABILITY IN BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRES
Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, 1965; 45 pp.

The objectives of this study were (1) to develop a general classification system for life history items, (2) to determine test-retest reliability estimates, and (3) to estimate resistance to examinee faking, for representative biographical questionnaires. Two 100-item questionnaires were constructed through random assignment by content area of 200 selected items taken from several biographical questionnaires. These items were then randomly re-arranged into new presentation orders to form two additional questionnaires for re-test purposes. Each stem-alternative combination of the 200 total items (multiple-choice) was rated on a 9-interval social desirability scale. Using rating variation coefficients with regard to social desirability, the investigator attempted to establish a single item classification system with the greatest criterion prediction. Test and re-test administrations were separated by a time period of ten to fourteen weeks. Subjects were undergraduate males in education, psychology and sociology. Both normal and artificial instructions were used when the tests were administered, in order to elicit student responses which could be used to obtain accurate reliability coefficients and 'fakeability' scores. Results showed test-retest reliability coefficients not to be high, but much larger than corresponding coefficients obtained between normal and artificial (fake) set conditions.

Starry, Allan R., van W. Raubenheimer, I., and Tesser, Abraham
'Stability Ratings as Classifiers of Life History Item Retest Reliability'
JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY, vol.53, no.1; 1969; pp.14-18

Investigation concerned the prediction of fakeability and stability of validated life history items. Two studies were conducted: (a) 26 judges rated 60 (Questionnaire A) and 52 (Questionnaire B) discretely scored items for probable fakeability and stability, indexes of which were based on retest responses of 321 undergraduates over three months; (b) 25 judges rated 88 continuously scored items for probable response stability. Correlation with actual retest stability for 106 first year undergraduates was 0.47. Little difference was found in predicting stability for discrete and continuous items. The Probable Response Stability Scale as a potential classifier variable of life history items as well as potential difficulties and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Thomas, Evan A.
'Herbert Blumer's Critique of The Polish Peasant: a Post-Mortem on the Life History Approach in Sociology'
JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF THE BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES,
vol.14, 1978; pp.124-131

Herbert Blumer's appraisal of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's *Polish Peasant* study and the panel discussion of Blumer's critique, sponsored by the Social Science Research Council in 1938, occasioned a discussion of the value of personal documents in social research which is indicative of the controversy surrounding their use in the interwar period. It is suggested that most sociologists writing in the 1930s were sceptical of the value of personal document research, because such research could not be conducted along the lines of experimental procedure in physical science. Personal document research was in decline by 1938. The critique and conference consistuted a post-mortem examination of this approach to social analysis.

Walter, James (ed)
READING LIFE HISTORIES
Griffith Papers on Biography, Institute for Modern Biography, Griffith University,
Brisbane, 1981; 119 pp.

A collection of ten articles concerned with the reading of literary, historical and political biographies, and with 'reading lives'. That is, there is criticism of assumptions, form and methodology (papers by Hollington, Zurbrugg, Raynaud, Saunders), along with exercises in life history (MacIntyre, Trahair, Kowalewski), and rumination by biographers on their published 'readings' of lives (Field, Webster, Walter). All the papers incorporate some criticism of received notions of biography, which is the underlying debate within the book as a collective enterprise.

Warren, Catherine E
The Written Life History as a Prime Research Tool in Adult Education'
ADULT EDUCATION, vol.32, no.4, Summer 1982; pp. 214-228

Examines these questions: What are life histories? What problems and people are best suited for them? What motivates people to write them? Does the collection procedures affect the content? and How should the material be analysed?

Watson, L.C.
'Understanding a life history as a subjective document: hermeneutical and phenomenological perspectives'
ETHOS, vol.4, no.1, 1976; pp. 95-131

Although the life history has been utilised as a source of information about the human condition in social scientific research for more than fifty years, it has nearly always occupied a marginal role in comparison to such techniques as structured observation, interviewing and other procedures whose purposes are experimentation and hypothesis testing. Life histories have lacked a consistent point of view defining the objectives it ought to serve, and there has been little agreement on how to interpret life history data. Consequently, the results of research utilising life history data are difficult to appraise as their objectives and methods have been as diverse as the personalities, interests, and motivations of the investigators themselves. The author seeks to demonstrate that the philosophical disciplines of hermeneutics and phenomenology provide a framework for bridging the gap between the researcher and the subject of the life history, and for understanding the nature of the subjective experience as a phenomenon in its own right. He maintains that the phenomenon of life history posseses appropriate attributes that should be regarded as natural or intrinsic objects of inquiry. In the life history these attributes may be understood as the subjective consciousness of the person who relates their life events. The life history is the way a person conceptualises the stream of experience that constitute their lives as they know it, and understanding means grasping the operating characteristics of the context in which the life history as a production is played out.

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2. ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Binder, Wolfgang
ANGLOS ARE WEIRD PEOPLE FOR ME; INTERVIEWS WITH CHICANOS AND PUERTO RICANS
John F.Kennedy Insitut fur Nordamerikastudien, Bibliotek Freie Universitat Berlin, Berlin, 1979; 395 pp.

This book presents the statements of eight Mexican Americans and 10 Puerto Ricans, aged from 19 to 29, who were interviewed to reveal their degree of acculturation. Questions include attitude, behaviour and/or fact-finding items and cover habitat; family background; intactness of family; educational, income and occupational levels of parents and respondents; primary groups (e.g. family, lose friends, neighbours); peer group influence; behaviour and/or achievement models; life history; attitudes toward childhood and adolescent self; interpersonal relations; attitudes toward in-group and out-groups, especially social distance attitudes toward Anglo-Saxon Americans, Blacks and other Latin groups; value judgment and clashes; ethnic and cultural loyalties; individual and group identity; self-stereotyping; degree of historical consciousness and awareness of discrimination; ego ideals; concept of sex roles; supernaturalism; religious beliefs; folk culture; myth; magic; 'curanderismo'; and spiritualism. Brief introductions to Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans discuss self-referents, historical background of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans on the island, immigration, migrant workers, law enforcement, education, family social values, the Chicano Movement, folk beliefs, forms and aspects of Puerto Rican dependence, characteristics of the island population, migration to the mainland, the agony of acculturation, and cultural life and its organisation in the New York Puerto Rican community.

Bossard, J.H.S.
THE LARGE FAMILY SYSTEM: AN ORIGINAL STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILY BEHAVIOUR
University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1956; 325 pp.

This study is about the 'large family' as a way of child rearing and family living, based on the life histories of one hundred large families. It is concerned to stress (a) the importance of the large family in child development, (b) the existence of a large family system, and (c) personality in the large family. It is not a statistical analysis, but is intended as an exploratory study, and all conclusions are offered tentatively, aiming to provide insights and to suggest hypotheses for subsequent research.

Cooper, Paulette (ed)
GROWING UP PUERTO RICAN
Arbor House Publishing Co., New York, 1972; 186 pp.

This volume contains the narratives of 17 Puerto Rican young adults, describing the major events in their life histories to the editor. They were interviewed in their own homes and schools, at work, and in the streets. Among the narratives are the accounts of Fernanda, who was told she was too stupid to bother studying, and who now has a Masters degree; Juan, who went through a drug experience until he found his way back; Miguel, proud of being Puerto Rican, resentful of white girls; Rodriguez, called 'Lousy Spic' in New York, and 'Gringo' in Puerto Rico; Mario, half-black, half-Puerto Rican, and denounced for both; Carmelia, once nearly killed by a drug addict; and, Rosita, who shares with them the sense that Puerto Ricans are different - 'but good different'.

Crane, Julia G and Angrosino, Michael V
FIELD PROJECTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY: A STUDENT HANDBOOK
General Learning Press, Morristown, New Jersey, 1974; 197 pp.

This manual is an introduction to field techniques for undergraduate anthropology students. It describes fourteen projects, each devoted to a traditional area of anthropological enquiry. A 'method' or 'data collecting tool' is suggested by which each topic may be investigated profitably. Project 1 describes a suitable beginning to field assignments. Projects 2 to 13 explain how to carry out various aspects of these assignments, including specific examples, illustrations and instructions. The chapters are entitled Making Maps. Charting Kinship, Interviewing Informants, Participant Observation, Collecting Life Histories, Using Personal Documentation, Digging into Cultural History, Analysing Folklore Content, Doing Ethnosemantic Research, Using a Standardised Questionnaire, Studying Formal Organisations, and Taking Photographs. Project 14, Planning a Community Study, can be used as a general summation of methods and concepts presented in the manual. Three rules emphasised throughout the book as being of the greatest importance for the collection of field notes are label work carefully, take extensive notes, and check up on yourself.

Diaz-Royo, Antonio T
'Manoeuvres and Transformations in Ethnobiographies of Puerto Rican Migrants'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol 4, no.1, February 1983; pp. 19-28

The mutually tactful exploration which led to both interviewees and interviewer's self-disclosures is examined. Two instances - dealing with the theme of authority management and the concepts of race and colour - are used to illustrate transformations of the culture-bound strategies of coping in the course of the migrants' life histories.

Frisbie, Charlotte J
'Traditional Navajo Women: Ethnographic and Life History Portrayals'
AMERICAN INDIAN QUARTERLY, vol.6, no.1-2, Spring-Summer 1982; pp. 11-33

See under WOMEN

Holzberg, Carol S
'Anthropology, Life Histories, and the Aged: the Toronto Baycrest Centre'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol.18, no.4, 1983-84; pp. 255-275

Describes the accomplishments of elderly Jews residing at the Toronto Baycrest centre, a multi-level geriatric facility, who formed a memoir activity group which eventually led to publication of their memoirs. The value of the activity for the group and for other groups of older persons in general is discussed.

Lacey, Roderic
'... No Other Voice Can Tell: Life Histories in Melanesia'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY,
vol.5, no.1, February 1984; pp.5-35

See under METHODOLOGY

Langness, L L
THE LIFE HISTORY IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCE
Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London, 1965; 82 pp.

As part of a series on anthropological methods, this book reviews the use of the life history method from prior to 1925 through to the present, to show that there has been a long interest in it in anthropology, but not even the influence of Kluckhohn since 1945 could prevent the method from falling away in the 1950s. Even though the work of Oscar Lewis is considered 'masterly', it is 'almost exclusively descriptive, involving very little in the way of analysis of 'problem- orientation'.

Lewis, Oscar
FIVE FAMILIES: MEXICAN CASE STUDIES IN THE CULTURE OF POVERTY
Basic Books, New York, 1959; 351 pp.

Using his own distinctive ethnological reportage, Lewis describes the minute and as nearly as possible total observation of the daily life of five family households in a community. He previously studied these five family households in *Life in a Mexican Village*, which was Tepoztlan, and he then followed them to Mexico City. He describes a day in the life of each of the five families. His life history methodology enables anthropologists to study more heterogeneous, modern societies.

Lewis, Oscar
THE CHILDREN OF SANCHEZ: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MEXICAN FAMILY
Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1964; 507 pp.

Oscar Lewis is anthropologist who has written extensively on the 'culture of poverty'. This particular work is about a poor family in Mexico City, Jesus Sanchez and his four children. Using an intensive life history method, the purpose of Lewis's research is to provide 'an inside view of family life', in order to show what it means to grow up in a one-roomed slum tenement home in the centre of a rapidly changing and developing Latin American city.

Lewis, Oscar
PEDRO MARTINEZ: A MEXICAN PEASANT AND HIS FAMILY
Secker and Warburg, London, 1964; 507 pp.

A tape-recorded study of a Mexican peasant family as told by three of its members - the father - Pedro Martinez - his wife, and the eldest son, which seeks to convey what it means to be a peasant in a nation undergoing rapid cultural change: how peasants feel, how they think, and how they express themselves. In terms of the role of the peasantry in the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Pedro Martinez's story is of special interest because his life history gives a firsthand account of a great revolution as seen by a peasant who not only lived through it, but actively participated and identified with its ideals. This life story illustrates some of the achievements and shortcomings of the Mexican Revolution on the village level.

Lewis, Oscar
LA VIDA: A PUERTO RICAN FAMILY IN THE CULTURE OF POVERTY
Panther Modern Society, London, 1968; 812 pp.

The author uses his life history approach in anthropology to study poverty and family life among Puerto Ricans both in Puerto Rico and the United States. It is a tape-recorded story of a low-income Puerto Rican slum family in San Juan and New York, focusing on what Lewsis calls the 'culture of poverty'. As well as a detailed ethnography, Lewis provides an introduction which discusses both the concept of the culture of poverty and the use of the life history method with a single, extended family.

Liebow, Edward B
'A New Chapter: Elderly Urban Indians and Political Activism in Phoenix'
Paper delivered to 82nd Annual Conference of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, November 17-20, 1983; 19 pp.

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Metcalf, Ann Rosenthal
'Effects of boarding school on Navajo Maternal Attitudes and Behaviour'
Paper delivered at 71st Annual Conference of the American Anthropological Association, Toronto, 1972; 10 pp

See under WOMEN

Morin, Francoise
'Anthropological Praxis and Life History'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol.3, no.1, February 1982; pp. 5-30

See under METHODOLOGY

Thomas, W.I. and Znaniecki, F
THE POLISH PEASANT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
Dover Publications, New York, pub.1918-20; 1114 pp.

Probably the classic and most extensive use of the life history method, which has been an inspiration ever since. It is the story of a Polish emigre to Chicago, Wladek Wisniewski. The life history describes the early phases of the central character's life in a Polish village, his early schooling and entry into work, his migration to Germany and then to the United States in search of employment, and his subsequent plight in Chicago. For the authors, 'personal life records, as complete as possible, constitute the *perfect* type of sociological material, and that if social science has to use other materials at all it is only because of the practical difficulty of obtaining at the moment sufficient number of such records to cover the totality of sociological problems, and the enormous amount of work demanded for an adequate analysis of all personal materials necessary to characterise the life of a social group ... Indeed, it is clear that even for the characterisation of single, social science data - attitudes and values - personal life records give the most exact approach.' The authors say that there is a need to consider both 'the combination of a social *and* an individual phenomenon' and the need to take into account both the subjective *and* objective definition of the situation.

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3. AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Gigy, Lynn L
'Reconstruction of the Personal Past: Differences in Older Women'
Paper delivered to 30th Conference of the Gerontological Society, San Francisco, November 1978; 15 pp.

It was hypothesised that women in different current life circumstances would emphasise different life content areas in verbal reports of their life histories. A basically homogenous sample of 30 women (average age = 58.5 years) was divided into women who had never had children, women whose children had left home, and women who had at least one child living at home. Life history interviews focused on events self-selected by the subjects. The results were coded into 11 content areas derived from the data. ANOVA tests indicated differences for four of the areas. Multiple Range tests showed the empty-nest women as the most likely to mention Family or Procreation, and the non-empty nest women were the most likely to report Self memories. A t-test showed no difference in interest in children with the empty-nest women, but there was an increase in the importance of the husband which appeared to be at the expense of Self concerns. The subjects were similar in their overall life situations and, in accordance with the hypothesis, showed the same basic pattern in the content of their remembered pasts. However, differences in current life circumstances did create meaningful alterations in memory of the past.

Holzberg, Carol S
'Anthropology, Life Histories, and the Aged: the Toronto Baycrest Centre'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol.18, no.4, 1983-84; pp. 255-275

See under ANTHROPOLOGY

Lalive-d'Epinay, Christian
'Depressed Elderly Women in Switzerland: An Example of Testing and of Generating Theories'
GERONTOLOGIST, vol.25, no.6, December 1985;pp. 597-604

Results of a Swiss study revealed high proportion of farm women were depressed. Their depression is accounted for through the development of a theory of culture shock which is based upon the conflict between traditional values and everyday realities. The importance of using life histories to supplement survey data in theory development is illustrated.

Lally, Maureen et. al
'Older Women in Single Room Occupant (SRO) Hotels: A Seattle Profile'
GERONTOLOGIST, vol. 19, no.1, February 1979; pp. 67-73

Life histories and daily routines of women over the age of 55 living in Seattle single room occupant (SRO) hotels were studied using observational and interviewing methods. Residence in SRO's appears to be part of a natural life history progression for these women rather than the result of social pathology.

Liebow, Edward B
'A New Chapter: Elderly Urban Indians and Political Activism in Phoenix'
Paper delivered to 82nd Annual Conference of the American Anthropological Association,
Chicago, November 17-20, 1983; 19 pp.

Life history interviews with 22 elderly Indians (16 women and 6 men, aged 60 to 81) in Phoenix suggests that for many of them the Indian Senior Center offers a sociable arena where they assume activist roles, directly addressing ageing-related issues concerning health care, transportation, and emotional stress management. They engage in fund-raising activities in order to attend national and regional ageing policy conferences; offer a nutrition programme to new mothers; serve on local advisory boards for health services, transportation, planning and Area Ageing Offices; visit nearby reservation nursing homes; serve as VISTA volunteers; and run for local school boards. Among those who remain in the city, ageing does not necessarily lead to more conservative political attitudes and behaviours. Although many of the interviewees first came to Phoenix to attend boarding school during the time when government policy stressed regimentation and acculturation, some now support the school's continued operation for pragmatic reasons: the school is located on an enormously valuable property in the central business district. Thus, life history data indicate that the ageing process is characterised for elderly urban Indians living in metropolitan Phoenix, by increasing pragmatism, stability of political orientation, and the potential for heightened interest and participation in political affairs.

Markunas, Patricia V
'Age Norms and Age Constraints in Adulthood'
Paper delivered to the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association,
Toronto, August 1978; 14 pp.

The age-status system in adulthood was investigated, using a 58-item instrument which divided adulthood subjectively into three periods: normative expectations for various adulthood developmental tasks (marriage, parenthood, employment, retirement, etc.); the lower age constraints ('too young') for these behaviours. In addition, 22 items regarding personal and life history information about each subject were included. Two mailed response surveys of 1560 men and women between the ages of 25 and 55 years yielded 670 usable surveys. A factor analysis revealed nine meaningful factors including: (1) youth and young adulthood tasks; (2) maturity and career responsibilities; (3) norms for family events; (4) maturity and family responsibilities; (5) youth and career responsibilities; (6) subjective assessment of age; (7) prolonged adolescence; (8) retirement; and (9) length of education and career decisions. Age differences were of greatest importance; older subjects held more restrictive views on age norms and constraints than younger subjects. Attitudes corresponded with personal experience and decisions.

Mayer, Peter J
'The Evolution of Human Longevity: Towards a Biocultural Theory'
Paper delivered to 32nd Annual Scientific Meetings of the Gerontological Society,
Washington DC, November 25-29, 1979; 38 pp.

Homo sapiens is the only extant species for which there exists a significant post-reproductive period in the normal lifespan. Explanations for the evolution of this species-specific trait are possible through 'non-deterministic' theories of ageing, positing 'wear and tear' or the failure of nature to eliminate imperfection, or 'deterministic' theories which explain longevity as the by-product of selection for some other features such as general constitutional 'fitness' or optimal life-history strategy. All of these hypotheses, however, fail to propose a positive selective force which could have acted to favour longevity in evolving hominoid populations. Consideration of the evolutionary advantages of long life suggests a model of how selection for longevity could have effected a positive feedback loop between inclusive fitness and social support networks, representing the central biological and socio-cultural components of a bio-cultural theory. Results of preliminary testing of this theory, using data from New England family genealogies, suggest validity for this approach.

Myerhoff, Barbara G and Tufte, Virginia
'Life History as Integration'
GERONTOLOGIST, vol.15, no.6, 1975; pp. 541-543

Use of the life history technique with the elderly is described in two settings - in a university class and a class of senior citizens. The technique helps the elderly to record and interpret their histories, to make intergenerational connections, and to experience the continuity of their lives.

Radcliffe, David (ed)
'International Perspectives on Education and Aging'
EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY, vol. 10, no.3, 1984; pp. 185-267

The six articles in this special issue on international perspectives on education and ageing were written by Pierre Brasseul, Eric Midwinter, Walter Pitman, Isabel Hernandez, Eva Beverfelt, and David Glanz, discussing education for older people in France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Argentina, Israel and Norway. Issues include the effects of social and technological change on educational programmes and the need for continued personal development. It also discusses the value of life histories as culture bearers.

Romsa, Gerald and Bondy, Patricia
'Accessibility, Housing, Recreational Participation and Retirement Life Satisfaction: Some Preliminary Results Revised.'
Paper delivered to Canadian-German Congress, Peterborough, Ontario, August 28-September 11, 1983;
20 pp.

The hypothesis of this 1982 study of retirees in the city of Windsor (Canada) is that retired persons with the fewest housing constraints should exhibit a more active leisure behaviour pattern, and a higher expression of life satisfaction. To obtain the retirees' socio-economic and demographic profile data, life histories, free-time activity, patterns and measures of life satisfaction levels, 120 interviews, stratified by location and housing type, were conducted. Results indicated that both location and dwelling type do appear to be related to quality of retirement. Residents of privately operated apartments were found to be the most active. Respondents from public housing units are less active in most of the leisure categories recorded. The accessibility of retirement housing to recreational opportunities does improve the quality of retirement life. Questions raised by the study which need further analysis include: What crucial dwelling and locational elements enhance real and perceived recreational opportunities? And, does a change in housing environment influence the level of expectations and, thereby, perceptions of both quality of life and opportunities?

Starr, Jerold M
'Towards a Social Phenomenology of Aging: Studying the Self Process in Biographical Work'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol. 16, no.4, 1982-83; pp. 255-270

The author suggests that the established life history approach to the study of ageing has been reformulated to include the macro-structural and cultural context. Demonstrates the utility of some core concepts in social phenomenology and ethnomethodology, particularly Schutz's concept of biographical work, for developing this new conception of the self.

Tate, Lenore Artie
'Life Satisfaction and Death Anxiety in Aged Women'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol. 15, no.4, 1982; pp. 299-306

Investigated the life satisfaction and death anxiety of elderly women (N=60) as a function of demographic, life history, and stress variables. Through multiple regression, life satisfaction was predicted by a number of friends, good health, and, surprisingly, by having fewer offspring living in the same city.

Troll, Lillian
'Poor, Dumb and Ugly: the Older Women in Contemporary Society'
Paper delivered at 92nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, August 24-28, 1984; 20 pp.

A commonly-held belief in American society is that being an old woman is not a desirable state. One variety of this belief is stereotyping, which involves a restrictiveness of attitudes, so that old women are seen as possessing a limited and circumscribed set of qualities or characteristics. Restrictiveness is also associated with distortion and negative valences. The most detrimental aspect of bias is that the objects of that bias share the attitudes of the other members of their society, tending to stereotype, distort, and look down upon themselves. The findings from empirical studies examining the stereotype of old women as poor, dumb and ugly have remained similar over the past fifteen years. The majority of people below the poverty line are women over 65. Younger generations have more schooling than their mothers and grandmothers, even though women of all ages went back to school and jobs during the flood period of the late 1960s and 1970s. In addition, old women labelled attractive have to look youthful. In relation to men, old women lack power in society. except in the family. However, to negate the stereotype of the old woman, one has only to observe her diversity and to grasp the idea of relativity when defining old age. The older woman should be viewed from another perspective, one in which her life history records her transformation and individuality throughout her lifespan.

Weenolsen, Patricia
'Life and Self Meaning: The Process of their Creation'
Paper delivered to 94th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, August 22-26, 1986; 17 pp.

See under PSYCHOLOGY

Wolf, Mary Alice
'The Older Learner: Education as a Means to One's Past'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Philadelphia, November 29-December 2 1983; 21 pp.

See under ADULT EDUCATION

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4. PSYCHOLOGY

Barratt, Barnaby B et.al.
'Critical Studies on the Ideological Structure of Personality'
Paper delivered to 89th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August 24-26 1981; 39 pp.

This document contains four papers about the ideological structure of personality. A proposal for a theoretical and methodological reworking of the life-historical inquiry of personality psychology is presented along with a report of some preliminary studies that employ an intensive life-history approach to a distinct topic within the context of personality structure and form a series of independent but conceptually related research efforts. The introductory paper provides theoretical comments and an overview. Work on the refraction of power relations within the 'my' themes of self-representation is presented in the second paper, based on an analysis of one woman's life-history narrative. The next paper uses material from an interview with one man to outline a thesis on self-representation commonly implicated in the processes of making major life decisions. The final paper examines the constraints to rationality in the development if democratic attitudes, as demonstrated by interviews with an auto worker concerning his attitudes toward proposals for workplace democratisation. The set of papers argues that the study of personality functions is necessarily the study of ideological processes that requires explicit, systematic, and critical confrontation in order to be scientific.

Bright, Barry
CHANCE, CHANGE AND CONTINUITY: THE ROLE OF CHANCE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ITS EPISTEMOLOGICAL STATUS
Ph.D Thesis, University of Hull, 1987; 423 pp.

After an extensive review of the literature on the meanings and definition of 'chance' in the natural and social science philosophies. the role of 'chance' in developmental psychology is examined. This provides the backcloth for the empirical analysis of 32 case studies, of which six are discussed in some depth, using data collected through the intensive life history. The study demonstrates the uniqueness of individuals, and how individuality and chance in individual's lives may be usefully studied through the life history approach, and given the normative nature of other social science research techniques may. indeed, be the only way to study a phenomenon such as 'chance'.

Chaplin, Miriam T
'Practical Applications of Erik Erikson's Theory to College Reading Instruction and Interpretation'
Paper delivered to 20th Annual Meeting of the College Reading Association, Miami, October 20-23 1976; 12 pp.

Responses of four people to Toffler's book *Future Shock* are analysed in relation to Erik Erikson's theory of personality. Results were interpreted as support for Erikson's theory and as illustration of how people interpret written language in terms of their own situations and life histories. In general, adults applied more detached and objective interpretations and sought meanings relative to a wider society. Adolescent responses tended to be more subjective and egocentric. Implications for reading instruction are briefly discussed.

Charles, Don C. and Owens, William A
LIFE HISTORY CORRELATES OF AGE CHANGES IN MENTAL ABILITIES
Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, 1963; 213 pp

An exploration of the relationships between an individual's pattern of living and the retention of mental abilities with age was made and evaluated. The objectives were (1) to estimate the effects of an eleven-year increment (50-61) upon eight measurable mental abilities, (2) to estimate the effect of the given age increment upon individual and trait differences in these particular mental abilities, and (3) to reveal, via the scored life history, patterns of living which are typical of those whose mental abilities has treated more or less kindly. Ninety-six subjects who had been given the Army Alpha Examination in 1919 and 1950 were re-tested in 1961. In addition, they were given a 228-item 'Life Expectancy Inventory'. The average age of the subjects was nineteen years in 1919. The sub-tests of Alpha were combined into three components - verbal, numerical and reasoning. The results were classified in two ways: (1) those involving mental ability and (2) those involving the life history correlates of changes in mental ability. Findings indicate that there were no significant changes in sub-test scores or total score from age 50 to 61. There was, however, a significant decline on the numerical component. In addition, there were no significant changes in the magnitudes of either individual differences or trait differences from age 50 to 61.

Dembroski, Theodore M et. al.
'Devaluation of Forbidden Toys among Lower Socioeconomic Children as a Function of Severity and Specificity of Threat'
Paper delivered to Southwestern Psychological Association annual meeting, Dallas, April 1973; 9 pp.

A prediction derived from cognitive dissonance theory is that children devalue an attractive but forbidden toy when mild rather than severe threat deters them from playing with it. One study found the opposite effect for lower socio-economic class children, i.e. a harsh verbal threat produced more devaluation than a mild threat. Since the latter study was judged to contain methodological and theoretical difficulties, the present study was designed to further explore the 'forbidden toy' paradigm with lower-income children. Nature (loss of money versus loss of approval) and level (severe versus mild) of threat were varied in a two by two factorial design. It was predicted that lower-income children (a) devalue as forbidden toy more when threatened with loss of money than with loss of approval, (b) derogate the toy more under threat of severe rather than mild money loss, and (c) devalue the toy an equally small amount regardless of threat level in the loss of approval condition. The data supported the hypothesis. Four- and five-year old black children (N=43) selected from a day care centre located in a lower socio-economic neighbourhood in St. Petersburg, Florida, served as subjects. Findings are discussed in terms of reinforcement history and 'sour grapes'. suggesting that when a life history which includes repeated denials to requests for attractive objects leads one to believe that when an adult prohibits a toy, it means that the toy will never be available.

Halpin, Gerald et. al.
'Life History Antecedents of Current Personality Traits of Gifted Adolescents'
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN GUIDANCE
vol. 8, no. 1, 1975; pp. 29-35

Canonical correlational analyses of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire and a relatively scale-independent life history inventory yielded three interpretable roots for 186 females and four roots for 155 males. The resulting relationships made sense logically and psychologically and found support in the gifted child literature.

Hateley, B.J
'Spiritual Well-being through Life Histories'
Paper delivered at session on 'Ethnographic and Life History Perspectives in Aging' at the 36th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society, San Francisco, November 17-22 1983; 15 pp.

This paper describes the content, techniques, and benefits of a life history course, which was designed to extend the traditional goal of psychological development through autobiography into a spiritual context. The three major components of the course are described. The format of the lectures is presented focusing on concepts, ideas, and tools used in spiritual understanding and autobiography, e.g. life-span developmental psychology, theories of moral and spiritual development, and theories of the self. Weekly writing assignments, which integrate the various themes of life (family, health, work, money, death, sexual development, moral development) with spiritual development are described, along with the small group discussions held at the end of each class to share insights gained through the written assignments. The use and benefits of three special techniques, i.e. open ended statements, natural world metaphors, and sensitising questions, are discussed. The paper concludes with a discussion of the benefits of the course to its participants and suggestions for adapting the techniques to other settings and populations.

Jarvik, Lissy F (ed)
INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING IN ADULTS: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL INFLUENCES
Springer Publishing Co., New York, 1973; 177 pp.

The contributions to this volume were drawn from selected symposia of the Division of Adult Development and Aging at the 76th and 78th annual meetings of the American Psychological Association. The four parts of the book are as follows: Part I. Individual Changes in Adult Intelligence: Longitudinal Approaches; Part II. Somatic Components of Psychological Changes in Adults; Part III. Potential Contribution of Life History Approaches; and Part IV. Summary. The first part concentrates on longitudinal research in the field of ageing. In the second part, some of the somatic correlates of psychological change are examined, and data resulting from two longitudinal studies are included. Part III represents a recognition of the yet untapped contribution of lifetime experiential variables to the physical and mental changes accompanying the ageing process; and various modes of dealing with the problems of construction of a cogent life history interview are explored.

Jones, Franklin R and Heinen, James R K
STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND NON-GRADUATES BY AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS
1977; 16 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Mumford, Michael D and Owens, William A
'Life History Dimensions and Types between Age 18 and 30'
Paper delivered to 29th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association, March 23-26 1983; 77 pp.

See under METHODOLOGY

Oresick, Robert J et. al.
'Person Memory in Good Intuitive Judges of Personality'
Paper delivered at 91st Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Anaheim, August 26-30, 1983; 9 pp.

Recent work in person memory combines cognitive models of memory with theories of social cognition. To examine the accuracy of person perception, 66 college students (24 males, 42 females) were administered a programmed case using 21 episodes. After fifteen minutes of filler tasks, subjects were allowed free call for 30 minutes, followed by impression formation and attribution tasks. Data on memory organisation were categorised by interepisodic, temporal episodic, semantic episodic, and local and distant semantic organisations. Subjects were ordered by accuracy scores and divided into good, average and poor groups. An analysis of the results showed that good, average and poor judges did not differ in total number of correct ideas recalled from the life history, nor in the number of ideas recalled per episode. However, good judges showed significantly more distant semantic organisation than average or poor judges. All groups retrieved about one third of those episodes missed by the temporal search. All groups used a predominantly temporal search strategy. These findings suggest that models of person perception and memory may have to be expanded to explain why distant association of episodes is related to accuracy in prediction.

Oresick, Robert J
'Memory Retrieval, Explanation and Predictive Accuracy in Personality Judgment'
Paper delivered at 92nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, August 24-28, 1984; 11pp.

Accuracy of personality judgment has been found to be a source of individual differences in memory organisation. In order to understand the cognitive process mediating memory organisation, accuracy in intuitive personality judgments was assessed in eighteen female nurses by the 'programmed case' method. This task casts an actual life history into a series of episodes, with several alternative endings. The participants were asked to choose the correct one, based on their knowledge of the case to that point, and to explain their choices in writing, after four of the 21 episodes. One week later they were asked to write out as much as they could remember of the life history. Subjects were ranked by their use of distant retrieval and divided equally into high, average, and low accuracy groups; their explanations were then coded for their use of certain categories of information. The results showed that accuracy in personality judgment was related to the use of a distant retrieval strategy, and to the explanations given for those judgments. The use of motives, especially in context was related to accuracy. The use of global traits in isolation was not as successful as using information about social roles, relationships and emotional reactions to infer motives in each particular situation.

Rest, James R.
'The Impact of Higher Education and Moral Judgment Development'
Project Report 1. University of Minnesota, 1979; 80 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Watson, L.C.
'Understanding a life history as a subjective document: hermeneutical and phenomenological perspectives'
ETHOS, vol.4, no.1, 1976; pp. 95-131

See under METHODOLOGY

Weenolsen, Patricia
'Loss and Transcendence Life Themes'
Paper delivered to 93rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August 23-26, 1985; 18 pp.

Psychologists have often observed an underlying pattern or theme in the accounts that individuals give of their lives. To test a humanistic-existential approach to human development, 48 women were interviewed with the Loss and Transcendence (L/T) Life History Form. The L/T Life Theme is expressed in two ways: the expanded version includes the major events, relationships, or experiences contributing to the theme and the core version is a brief bipolar pattern of loss and transcendence. Each subject's protocol was analysed for themes: major events and relationships as related by the interviewee were listed and repetitions, amount of attention, and significance of events were noted. From the 48 life histories and 5 pilot study histories, 53 case histories were constructed with 53 L/T Life Themes. The results yielded persuasive evidence for the existence of life themes consisting of patterns of loss and transcendence over the life span. Three origins of L/T Life Themes were found: (1) a traumatic life event; (2) a cognitive perception and organisation of one's life experiences; and (3) the internalisation of both parents. A qualitative analysis of the protocols yielded substantial evidence that life losses were metaphorical of the death of self and transcendence was metaphorical of the immortality of self. It is concluded that the L/T Life Theme forms a major conceptual contribution within the L/T approach to life span development.

Weenolsen, Patricia
'Life and Self Meaning: the Process of their Creation'
Paper delivered to 94th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington DC, August 22-26 1986; 17 pp.

Research has not addressed issues of life meaning in a life-span developmental framework. The Loss and Transcendence paradigm was developed as a humanistic-existential approach to life-span development which has as its central theme the concept that individuals are in a continuous process of creating their lives and their selves. To explore loss and transcendence over the life-span, 48 women aged 25-67 were interviewed with the Loss and Transcendence Life History Form. Eleven issues regarding life meaning were investigated, including what is meant by life meaning, the prevalence of the belief in life meaning, whether life meaning is found or created, the relationship between belief in meaning and one's orientation to loss or transcendence, and whether a taxonomy of meaning can be found. The majority of respondents reported feeling that life had meaning. The results revealed that: (i) individuals throughout their life reviews demonstrated orientations to either loss or transcendence; (2) individuals exhibited patterns of losses and transcendence over their lives; (3) networks of events, thoughts, and feelings represented death and life to respondents; and (4) grieving, searching, replacing, and reintegrating were all stages of the loss and transcendence process. Qualitative analysis revealed four different types of self, and loss and transcendence were traced for individuals over their life spans. These findings hold significance for an existential life-span developmental paradigm.

Whitbourne. Susan Krauss and Dannefer, W. Dale
'Pictorial Representations of the Life Course'
Paper delivered to Joint 34th Annual Meeting of the Scientific Gerontological Society and the 10th Scientific and Educational Canadian Association on Gerontology, Toronto, November 8-12 1981; 37 pp.

Temporal orientation may be defined as a central aspect of identity that pertains to the individual's unique interpretation of the life course. As a component of identity, temporal orientation should be affected by social contextual variables. Temporal orientation was assessed in a random sample of 94 men and women aged 24-61 years of age. Respondents were requested to 'draw your life' as part of a three-hour identity-life history interview. Markers were no predefined for age, nor was there any vertical axis specified, permitting respondents freedom to construct their own time referents and evaluative criteria. Four dimensions of temporal orientation were defined: time concept as linear or spatial; temporal perspective; content of most significant life event; and cognitive-affective evaluation of the life course as a global entity. Age alone had no significant effects when social contextual variables were evaluated. Women tended to be more present- and past-oriented than men, who exhibited greater future orientation. These effects were mediated by occupational prestige among men and homemaker versus employed working status among women. Affective descriptions of life course events also varied by sex and social status. The findings suggest that age is not related to the dimensions of temporal orientation.

White, Robert W
'Teaching Personality through Life Histories'
TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY, vol. 1, no. 2, 1974; pp. 69-71

Analysis of life histories as case material requiring disciplined observation and objectivity and exemplifying basic principles and theories of behaviour is described as a teaching technique for a course in the psychology of personality.

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5. SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Anderson, Nils
THE HOBO: THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE HOMELESS MAN
Pheonix Books, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1961 (1st. pub. 1923); 296 pp.

A classic study of hobohemia in the early 1920s, which using qualitiative techniques, including life history data, describes the life and changes of the hobo in Chicago. The author identifies different types of hobo, the nature of the problem, and provides a summary of findings and recommendations.

Anderson, Nils
THE AMERICAN HOBO: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1975; 187 pp.

The life history method is used for relating the story and lifeways of the American hobo, who figured so vitally in the development of the American middle west and far west between 1860 and 1920. This is a follow-up to his original book, first published in 1923, and provides the author's own autobiographical experiences of hobohemia.

Armstrong, Paul F.
TAKING KNOWLEDGE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF MEDITATION AND THE DIVINE LIGHT MISSION
Ph.D Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Essex, 1977; 374 pp.

The field work for this research was carried out between 1974 and 1976. In the attempt to carry out a sociological study of meditation, several research method were employed, including a literature review, an analysis of newspaper reports, as well as extensive use of participant observation, and in-depth interviews, which were intended to obtain or supplement the life histories of a few members of the particular group under study. The combination of these techniques - the biographical approach - had the strength of providing 'intuitive understanding' of the phenomenon of meditation, the 'inside story'.

Baer, Daniel J and Corrado, James J
'Heroin Addict Relationships with Parent During Childhood and Early Adolescent Years'
JOURNAL OF GENETIC PSYCHOLOGY
vol. 124, no. 1, 1974; pp. 99-104

The antecedents of drug addiction were studied in addicts and non-users. Results suggest that the early life histories of individuals may be important predisposing factors, particularly if the life history includes an unhappy childhood, harsh physical punishment, or lack of parental concern.

Baller, Warren R et. al.
'Midlife Attainment of the Mentally Retarded: A Longitudinal Study'
GENETIC PSYCHOLOGY MONOGRAPHS, vol.75, Part II, May 1967; pp. 235-329

This study located mentally retarded, slow learning, and normal subjects who had been evaluated during the 1930s. Their present status and functioning were reported and the study searched for reasons for the subject's different levels of life adjustment. Over 400 of the original subjects were located. They were in their middle fifties at the time of this study. Each subject was interviewed or responded to a life history questionnaire. Social status was evaluated. A sample were given intelligence tests. Results indicated that the mentally retarded group had a higher death rate than the other two groups. The mentally retarded group members were more likely to live alone and also had a higher divorce rate. Although the mentally retarded group had shown steady improvement in self support over the years, their unemployment rate was still above the national average. All groups were generally law abiding. Those subjects in the mentally retarded group tended not to participate as much socially as those subjects in the other two groups. No significant gains in intelligence had been made by any group.. The low group had had fewer desirable experiences. Case studies of successful (four males, four females) and unsuccessful (four males and four females) subjects from the low group are presented. Factors relating to their successful and unsuccessful life adjustments are discussed. Recommendations are made about the mentally retarded and about further research.

Bemporad, Jules R
'Adult Recollections of a Formerly Autistic Child'
JOURNAL OF AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS
vol. 9, no. 2. June 1979; pp. 179-197

Describes the life history, current status, and memories of a 31-year-old man who, as a child, had been diagnosed as autistic.

Bogdan, Robert (ed),
BEING DIFFERENT: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JANE FRY
John Wiley and Son, New York, 1974; 235 pp.

It is interesting to note that Bogdan says that he *compiled* rather than *wrote* this autobiography, and that he did so because of his disillusionment with contemporary social science research which created and produced its own realities which it would present as that experienced by those we call subjects. Jane Fry is a transsexual, and the book is a narrative of her life as she tells it. Its aim is common in the social sciences: to provide a better understanding of society, its institutions, and those who pass through them. Bogdan's role was to collect and edit life history material, having guided the narrator to give details and elaborate areas of sociological rather than popular interest.

Chambliss, Bill
BOX MAN: A PROFESSIONAL THIEF'S JOURNAL
New York, Harper and Row, 1972; 151 pp.

In the tradition of Sutherland's Chic Conwell, Chambliss provides the biography of Harry King, another professional thief. The autobiography is provided as the main part of the book, with a sociological commentary given afterwards.

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de Bertoni, Alicia Lucino and de-Carranza, Maria Cristina Vesco
THE IDENTIFICATION OF TALENTS IN SOCIALLY UNDERPRIVILEGED GROUPS
1980; 30 pp

Maintaining that the environment in general and schools in particular largely influence whether an individual's talents will be identified/encouraged or ignored/dis-couraged, the document focuses on ways to identify and stimulate talents in socially underprivileged individuals. The study was based on two approaches. The first approach, systems theory, was used to develop an analytical framework. According to the systems theory approach, systems (including organisations such as schools and families) are classified according to the nature of their relationship with the surrounding environment. In addition, laws are sought which govern the behaviour of each part of the system and the interaction between the system and the environment. The second approach, a case study or 'life histories' approach was used to show how several individuals in a poor rural setting achieved a success or failure status and either did or did not develop a potential talent. Examples are presented of the ways in which an individual's talent or self-esteem is influenced through interaction with school, society, family, and cultural groups. For instance, an individual's self-esteem can suffer if he/she perceives low achievement in school and can suffer further if the family exhibits high anxiety in response to perceived or actual low achievement. Because findings from much of the literature on poverty and achievement indicate that poverty reinforces failure at school, the authors suggest that educators try especially hard to reverse these tendencies toward failure. Suggestions for reinforcing potential talents include that educators design curricula which are appropriate for individual needs, refrain from judging students as low achievers because they have low social status and poor school records, and assume that all students - and particularly underprivileged ones - possess undiscovered intellectual potential.

Edgerton, Robert and Ottina, Jean
A TWENTY-FIVE YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF PERSONS LABELED MENTALLY RETARDED
1986

In a follow-up of 407 mentally retarded children first studied in 1959, the study examined contributing influences of parental attitude and child-rearing practices as well as the larger society's socialising practices. Original demographic and attitudinal data were used to predict the functional adjustment of seventy members of the original cohort. Those adults found (on parents' ratings) to be doing much better or much worse than predicted were examined ethnographically. An attempt was made to detect factors that might account for successful or unsuccessful life adjustment. Among observations made of this group were (1) that the mothers were more accurate in assessing and predicting their children's life adjustment than were social agency or institutional personnel; (2) that problems associated with sexuality and physical and mental abuse were quite prominent; and (3) that cultural expectations relating to growth and development as envisaged in mainstream society were in conflict with these persons' individual patterns. The study points out the roles that mothers play in the lives of their retarded children and stresses their need for specific directions for helping those children at each stage in their lives. A six-page list of references is included. Nearly half the document is comprised of thirteen appendices that include: Leichman's 1959 Interview Scales, including those pertaining to home environment; sample questions from the Progress Assessment Chart of Social and Personal Development; sample items from the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) and the PARI scoring sheet; the 1959 and 1983 standard scores on the 23 scales of the PARI; and seven life histories.

Ensminger, Margaret E et. al.
'School and Family Origins of Delinquency: Comparisons by Sex'
Paper delivered to Conference of Society for Life History Research, Monterey, November 25, 1981; 62 pp.

This paper concerns early social adaptational and family antecedents of teenage delinquent behaviour in a population of black first graders who were re-assessed ten years after the initial study. Subjects were 705 teenagers who had participated in the 1966-67 Woodlawn Study and whose mothers had given permission for re-assessment. At the time of re-assessment, the community of Woodlawn had the highest rates of official juvenile delinquency, as measured by juvenile court data, of the 76 Chicago neighbourhoods. Issues of a particular interest for this re-assessment study were (1) whether first grade ratings of learning problems and/or aggressiveness were related to later delinquency, and (2) whether first grade social adaptational status (SAS) was related to later delinquency in the same way for males and females. Results showing relationships of first grade teacher ratings of shyness, aggressiveness, learning problems and relationships of family structure, aspects of family atmosphere (i.e. mother's expectations for her child's academic attainment and the mother's own psychological well-being), and family economic resources to teenage delinquency are reported. The information on delinquency in this study came from the subjects' responses to items in 'What's happening?' - a questionnaire that is a modified version of a validated delinquency scale developed by Gold (1970). A Rasch analysis of the items was performed separately for males and females to provide dependent and predictor variables. Then, log-linear models were used to analyse the data. Results are summarised and discussed.

Frazier, Charles E
'The Use of Life-Histories in Testing Theories of Criminal Behaviour: Toward Reviving a Method'
QUALITATIVE SOCIOLOGY, vol. 1, 1978; pp. 122-142

See under METHODOLOGY

Hughes, Helen M (ed)
THE FANTASTIC LODGE: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GIRL DRUG ADDICT
Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1961

In the classic tradition of the use of autobiographies of single case studies, this is the story of Janet Clark who was a heroin addict who ended up committing suicide, which provides insights into the nature of durg abuse, and the subterranean world of the drug addict.

Kaplan, Charles D
'Addict Life Stories: An Exploration of the Methodological Grounds for the Study of Social Problems
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LIFE HISTORY
vol. 3, no.1, February 1982; pp. 31-50

Explores the use of sociological life histories to study social problems such as drug addiction. The factors influencing the fluctuating popularity of this research technique within the social sciences are examined. The impact of the researcher's direct exposure to the interviewee's problems on research results is discussed.

Kaplan. Charles D
'Addict Life Stories: An Exploration of the Methodological Grounds for the Study of Social Problems (Part II)'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol. 32, no.4, Summer 1982; pp. 214-228

Oral life histories of two drug addicts' prison experiences are used to illustrate the kinds of insights into social problems which can be obtained by this method.

Klockars, Charles B
THE PROFESSIONAL FENCE
London, Tavistock, 1975; 242 pp.

Vincent Swaggi, the central character of this book, was a major dealer of stolen property, identified by the author when he was interviewing thieves in prison. The book is based on notes taken rather than the use of a tape recorder, and makes an important contribution to criminology in filling a gap in knowledge about trade in stolen property, and has served to guide law enforcement and legislative efforts have subsequently been made to reduce the amount of property theft and the prosecution of a type of criminal essential to it. This shows how qualitative research, including life history techniques, can be used for applied social science research.

Liebow, Elliot
TALLY'S CORNER: A STUDY OF NEGRO STREETCORNER MEN
Little Brown, Boston, 1967; 260 pp.

A study based on a year's participant observation and in part the use of the life history method, focusing on black 'streetcorner men' in a low-income area of Washington DC. The men were either unemployed or underemployed (in part-time work), or in low paid, unskilled, dead-end jobs. Liebow studied their attitude to work, families and how they behave in their culture, seeing their behaviour as a product of situational constraints, not cultural patterns. The book includes a detailed methodological discussion.

Mallory, Charles H and Walker, C. Eugene
'MMPI O-H Scale Responses of Assaultive and Nonassaultive Prisoners and Associated Life History Variables'
EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT
vol. 32, no. 4, 1972; pp. 1125-1128

The O-H (Overcontrolled-Hostility) scale was developed to distinguish among normal subjects and groups of extremely assaultive, moderately assaultive and nonviolent prisoners on the basis of 31 MMPI items.

Olson, Deborah L
'The Education of Disabled Girls: Personal Experiences and Reflections'
Paper delivered at the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 16-20 1986; 15 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Plummer, Kenneth (ed)
THE MAKING OF THE MODERN HOMOSEXUAL
London, Hutchinson, 1982;   280 pp.

A collection of essays that develop coherently the interactionist perspective to homosexuality, including a section containing a series of exploratory empirical studies which utilise the life history as one of the methods of data collection.

Polansky, Norman A et. al.
THE APATHY-FUTILITY SYNDROME IN CHILD NEGLECT: AN URBAN VIEW. FINAL REPORT
School of Social Work, Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia, 1978; 91 pp.

The final report of a child abuse/neglect programme involving 46 white families in urban Philadelphia, reviews differences found between neglectful and control parents in parental personalities, life histories, and in styles of adaptation associated with child neglect. Four papers are appended, comprising the bulk of the report. Appendices focus on the following topics: the development and field testing of the Childhood Level of Living Scale, a measure of how well a child is being cared for; class orientations in child neglect; public opinion and intervention in neglect; and the isolation of the neglectful family.

Richardson, Stephen A
'Careers of Mentally Retarded Young Persons: Services, Jobs and Interpersonal Relations'
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY
vol. 82, no. 4, 1978; pp. 349-358

Life histories and follow-up data at age 22 were obtained from 76 persons classified as mentally retarded and for non-retarded control subjects matched for age, gender, and social background.

Rosenthal, Kristine M and Keshet, Harry F
FATHERS WITHOUT PARTNERS: A STUDY OF FATHERS AND THE FAMILY AFTER MARITAL SEPARATION
Rowan and Littlefield, Totowa, New Jersey, 1981; 187 pp.

The father's role in child rearing has become a major issue in modern family life. Each year in ever-increasing numbers, men actively share child care responsibility in the nuclear family and after divorce. This book, based on personal stories of 129 men, focuses on two issues: the relationship between fathers and their children when the father is no longer legally married to the child's mother, and on the effects of that relationship on the lifestyles and personal growth of these men and their children. Following an introductory overview of the issue of fatherhood, the book describes the life histories of four men who were willing to speak freely about events from their childhood and marriages; the life styles of separated fathers who maintain regular contact with their children after marital separation; the stages, problems and solutions that characterise the evolving experience of divorced men; the attitudes and relationships of divorced men to their ex-wives; and the effect of divorce on the men's lifestyles, including housing arrangements, finances and work lives. The book concludes with a call for a new conception of the modern family and of parental consciousness which positively affects the moral, emotional, and psychological growth of fathers themselves.

Segal, Julius (ed)
MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM REPORTS NO. 5
Health Services and Mental Health Administration, US Government Office, Washington DC, 1971; 397 pp.

This report reflects the broad range of National Institute of Mental Health activities in areas of research, development of mental health manpower, and delivery of mental health services. Twenty papers examine, respectively, the relationship of life histories and biochemistry of siblings and twins to schizophrenia, training of Navajo medicine men, development of intelligence in babies, studies of child abuse and infant accidents, community mental health centre in Appalachia, educating new leaders via Operation Hope, manner in which social organisation of animal communities can lead to a population crisis destroying them, community mental health center in the San Francisco westside, non-professionals serving aged public housing tenants, nursery schools in service of mental health, follow-up survey of long-term effects of LSD, pre-school programme for disadvantaged children, infant stimulation as part of well baby care in a disadvantaged area, mental illness and competency to stand trial, studying consciousness with physiological feedback technique,, voluntary control of internal states, asymmetry of human brain and implications for training,, controlling automatic functions, and drug abuse.

Shaw, Clifford R.
THE JACK ROLLER: A DELINQUENT BOY'S OWN STORY
Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966 (1st pub.1930);
Introduction by Howard S. Becker; 205 pp.

The subject matter of this volume is limited to the case study of the career of a young male delinquent - Stanley, whose case is one of a series of two hundred similar studies of repeated male offenders under seventeen years of age, all of whom were on parole from correctional institutions. The author had six years' contact with Stanley, from the age of 16, during which time an intensive life history study was carried out, and the case is puiblished to illustrate the value of his 'own story' in the study and tratement of delinquency.

Sobell, Linda C and Sobell, Mark B
'Validity of Self-Reports in Three Populations of Alcoholics'
JOURNAL OF CONSULTING AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
vol. 46, no. 5, October 1978; pp. 901-907

See under METHODOLOGY

Stuck, Mary Frances and Glassner, Barry
'The Transition from Drug Use and Crime to Non-Involvement: a Case Study'
ADOLESCENCE, vol. 20, no.79, Fall 1985; pp. 669-679

Presents a case study of one subject's life history, obtained from depth interviews, which reveals the process of change from involvement to non-involvement in drug use and criminal activity. Explains how, for this subject, rehabilitation was facilitated by specific structural factors which interacted with and altered personal values.

Sutherland, Edwin H
THE PROFESSIONAL THIEF
Phoenix Books, University of Chicago, Chicago, 2nd ed. 1967 (1st. pub. 1937); 256 pp.

The main part of this book is a description of the profession of theft by a person, Chic Conwell, who had been engaged almost continually for more than 20 years in that profession. This description was secured in two ways: (a) the thief wrote approximately two-thirds of the book on topics and questions relating to his life history; (b) he and the author discussed what had been written, and a verbatim report of their discussions was prepared. The author organised the body of materials, wrote short connecting passages, and eliminated duplication as much as possible, attempting to preserve ideas, attitudes and phraseology of the professional thief, who read the manuscript as organised, and suggested corrections, which were incorporated in the final draft.

Zetlin, Andrea G and Turner, Jim L
'Coping with Adolescence: Perspectives of Retarded Individuals and Their Family'
Paper delivered to 16th Annual Gatlinburg Conference on Research in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, March 16-18 1983; 24 pp.

Retrospective accounts of the nature of adolescence as experienced by mildly handicapped individuals were gathered through in-depth conversations and interviews over an 18 month period with 48 mildly retarded adults (ages 22 to 60) living independently in the community. Structured life history interviews were also conducted with parents or other close family members of 37 of the 46 subjects. Questions focused on the impact of the handicapped child on the family and the child's developmental history, including behavioural characteristics during the teen years. For 85 percent of the subjects, adolescence was seen as a time of acute stress in the two primary areas of parent/child relations and identity issues. Serious behaviour problems were reported for 61 percent of subjects. The following contributing factors to a high incidence of emotional problems were reported: (1) absence of normative expectations by parents; (2) lack of a peer support network; and (3) adolescent emotional over-responsiveness, linked to a deficit in the socialisation of emotionality. Consistent relationships between patterns of parenting behaviour and the symptomatic behaviour of the retarded adolescents were noted.

Zetlin, Andrea G and Turner, Jim L
'Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood: Perspectives of Mentally Retarded Individuals and Their Families'
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY
vol. 89, no.6, May 1985; pp. 570-579

From ethnographic fieldnotes and life history interviews, basic descriptive data were presented that depict the adolescent life stage as it was recounted by 25 mildly retarded individuals and their parents. Comparison of adolescent adjustment patterns and current adult status revealed that the central concerns of adolescence remain problems for only some mildly retarded adults.

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6. RACE

Armstrong, M. Jocelyn
'Ethnicity and Sex-role Socialisation: A Comparative Example Using Life History Data from Hawaii'
SEX ROLES: A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH
vol. 10, nos.3-4, February 1984; pp. 157-181

Hawaii's multi-ethnic society provides a field for researching the impact of ethnicity on the learning of female sex roles. Life data from one Chinese/Hawaiian woman and Portuguese/Hawaiian woman are used to compare their socialisation during their girlhoods in the 1920s and 1930s.

Binder, Wolfgang
ANGLOS ARE WEIRD PEOPLE FOR ME; INTERVIEWS WITH CHICANOS AND PUERTO RICANS
John F.Kennedy Insitut fur Nordamerikastudien, Bibliotek Freie Universitat Berlin, Berlin, 1979; 395 pp.

See under ANTHROPOLOGY

Blum, Zahava D
INCOME CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE: A COMPARISON OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971; 69 pp.

This analysis of income changes is based on retrospective life history data collected from white and black men, 30-39 years old in 1968. Educational level is shown to be the most important determinant of initial income for both blacks and whites, but the relationship is weaker for whites than for blacks. Ten years later, education shows a stronger relation to growth in income for whites than for blacks. The differential impact of levels of education and other background resources on initial income and income ten years later is examined. For initial income, black resources are more efficacious than those of whites, but the greater average resource levels of whites creates an initial income difference in favour of whites. Ten years later, the efficacy of white background resources for income growth is greater than that for blacks. Intervening events and experiences, whose efficacy favours blacks, keep the income gap from becoming even wider. A comparison of this income analysis with a previous analysis of occupational status suggests that whites may be using their resources to obtain jobs with a high status, with the expectation that the job status will in the long run bring high income, while blacks are doing the opposite. Testing the effectiveness of such a strategy (if it is a conscious strategy) indicates that it is effective for whites, while it would be much less so for blacks.

Blum, Zahava D
'White and Black Careers During the First Decade of Labor Force Experience. Part II: Income Differences'
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
vol. 1, no. 3, 1972; pp. 271-292

This paper presents an analysis of income changes based on retrospective life history data from white and black men, 30-39 years old, in 1968.

Blum, Zahava and Coleman James D
LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON THE INCOMES AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1970; 69 pp.

This analysis of the difference between black and non-black males in the processes underlying occupational growth uses retrospective life history data and studies the degree to which members of the two groups convert educational attainment into income and prestige, as well as the effects of parental resources in determining educational levels. The analysis showed that blacks attained lower levels than non-blacks both in income and prestige, principally as a result of lower growth rates rather than substantially lower starting points. There is a relatively small continuous effect of education on income, slightly smaller for blacks than for non-blacks. Black and non-black distribution of prestige remain in the same relative position. The analysis shows that the father's education and occupation and the mother's education all show independent effects on the son's educational attainment. For blacks, mother's education is of greater importance than the other two background characteristics, while among non-blacks the three characteristics are of approximately equal weight. There is a much stronger relationship between the occupation of father and that of son for non-blacks than for blacks.

Coleman, James S
A FLOW MODEL OF OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971; 34 pp.

This paper develops a model for the analysis of occupational history data as a contribution toward the development of a system of social accounts. The model is designed to examine the flow of men, throughout their lives, through the occupational structure. Using retrospective life history data collected from a sample of black and white men, the model treats men at age 13 as inputs into different statuses in education and the labour force, including the military, and examines changes through to age 39. In addition, hypothetical experiments are carried out via the model to find the occupational distribution of blacks if their particular educational and occupational experiences are modified to correspond to those of whites. The results of these experiments suggest the general utility of the model both for policy formulation and the scientific study of occupational changes.

Coleman, James S et. al.
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS CHANGES FOR BLACKS AND NONBLACKS DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1970; 66 pp.

Retrospective life history data are used in this analysis of the mechanisms which lead to differential levels of occupational success. The paper is based on data collected from a cohort of black men and a cohort of non-black men, aged 30-39 in 1968. The measure of occupational achievement used throughout is the occupational status of the first job held after last leaving full-time education and the status of the job held ten years later. The analysis shows that educational level far outweighs other background characteristics in determining the occupational status of the first job. Partly due to occupational discrimination, the value of education in terms of the status it brings is about twice as great for non-blacks as for blacks. The difference in the effects of education, combined with lower educational attainment by blacks, results in considerably lower status levels. After ten years, the status of non-blacks showed an increase of over 30 per cent, whereas that of blacks increased by just under 16 percent. The study found that roughly half of the difference in status change was due to original levels of resources and the remainder was due to the differential efficacy of these resources. The efficacy of intervening events such as on-the-job training showed no significant differences between blacks and non-blacks.

Coleman James S. et. al.
'White and Black Careers During the First Decade of Labor Force Experience. Part I: Occupational Status'
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
vol. 1, no. 3, 1972; pp. 243-270

Retrospective life history data are used in this analysis of the processes which lead to differential levels of occupational success, using data collected from cohorts of black and white men.

Cottle, Thomas J
BUSING
Beacon Press, Boston, 1976; 143 pp.

This book is based on personal accounts of individuals and families involved in different ways in the busing for school integration and experience in Boston, Massachusetts. The individuals who speak are both black and white, and include administrators, parents, students, teachers and residents of the city and suburbs. Their stories reflect their life histories as they relate to their current attitudes toward and status in the busing issue. Recurrent themes include racism, personal and family crises, social and economic concerns, parental aspirations for their children, and the children's responses to busing and the atmosphere surroundings it.

Diaz-Royo, Antonio T
'Maneuvers and Transformations in Ethnobiographies of Puerto Rican Migrants'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORAL HISTORY
vol. 4, no.1. February 1983; pp. 19-28

See under ANTHROPOLOGY

Gibson, Margaret A and Arvizu, Steven F
DEMYSTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
Monograph II, Bilingual Education Training Series, Cross-Cultural Resource Center, California State University, Sacramento, 1978; 67 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Karweit, Nancy
PATTERNS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: DISCONTINUITIES AND SEQUENCES (Report No.222)
Center for Social Organisation of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1977; 28 pp.

See under ADULT EDUCATION

Karweit, Nancy
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER ATTAINMENT: DETERMINANTS AND OCCUPATIONAL EFFECTS OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL
Center for Social Organisation of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1979; 351 pp.

See under ADULT EDUCATION

Liebow, Elliot
TALLY'S CORNER: A STUDY OF NEGRO STREETCORNER MEN
Little Brown, Boston, 1967; 260 pp.

See under SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Ornstein, Michael D
ENTRY INTO THE AMERICAN LABOR FORCE
Center for Study of Social Organizations of Schools, John Hopkins University, 1971; 470 pp.

This analysis of entry into the labour force by American men between the ages of 30 and 39 was based on a set of about 1,600 retrospective life history interviews, approximately half from whites and half from blacks. At the time of entry, the mean level of whites' education was higher than that of blacks and this was translated into jobs with higher prestige for the whites. When education was held constant there was little difference between the first job wages of whites and blacks. The only race differences at this early point were among men with very high levels of education, where whites had significantly better jobs. The social class of a respondent's family strongly influenced his level of education but did not affect the jobs he obtained. In the eight years after entry. the gap between whites and blacks spread to the lower levels of education. The tasks men performed were largely based on their levels of education, but their wages came increasingly to be dependent on experiential factors, so men with limited amounts of education could experience considerable wage mobility. The first jobs obtained after entry exerted a unique and continuing influence on later occupational mobility.

Ready, Timothy
'Learning to Adapt: Influences upon the Learning Behaviour of Adolescents in a South Texas City'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of American Anthropological Association, December 5 1982; 21 pp

See under EDUCATION

Reynolds, Diane A
'Economic Success of Ethnicity: Mexican-Americans in San Jose'
Paper delivered to 73rd Annual Meeting of American Anthropological Association, Mexico City, November 19-24 1974 (Revised version, 1976); 25 pp.

The ethnicity patterns and adaptive strategies of ten economically successful Mexican-Americans were studied over a period of one year in San Jose, California. Employed by a federally-funded community development project, the ten held positions from secretary to chief programme administrator, with salaries ranging from $6,000 to $20,000 per annum. A formal four-hour interview was conducted with each informant to obtain data on family background, economic and occupational success and satisfaction, and ethnicity. Life histories were also collected from each individual. Degree of economic success was determined by combining various measures - level of occupational skills, present salary, present status within the organisation, degree of job stability within the last year, degree of expressed job satisfaction, and degree of economic independence. Ethnicity was determined by their social networks and primary relationships, recreational and food preferences, most admired role models, religious affiliation, facility in Spanish, attitudes about Mexican and Anglo cultures, dress style, self-identification and expressed values, and display of ethnically-oriented political badges. Findings suggested that economic factors influenced the manner in which identity was expressed, but did not bear a simple, direct correlation with the strength of an individual's ethnic identity.

Thoen, Gail Ann
ASIAN REFUGEE STUDENTS: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING FOR AMERICA'S NEWEST IMMIGRANTS
Department of Family Life, University of Minnesota, 1982; 14 pp.

An experimental course on Asian American women, offered by the Department of Family Life at the University of Minnesota is described. The curriculum innovation was designed in response to the Asian refugee settlement in the St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota area. The undergraduate course used in 1982 anthology containing works focusing on Asian women's experiences here and abroad. The course begins with tracing the history of Asians in America and concludes ten weeks later with a lecture and demonstration on assertiveness training for Asian refugees. An interdisciplinary approach is used and additional topics include: Asians and California Anti-Miscegenation Laws; the life history of a Filipina in Hawaii; family structure and acculturation in the Chinese community in Minnesota; Asian and white interracial relationships in dating, marriage, and divorce; Asian women and family law; and nursing care in Indo-Chinese refugees. The course faculty, a Caucasian female and a Japanese male, served as role models for the students, hopefully illustrating how issues of sexism and racism could be publicly discussed, argued, and overcome based on classroom dialogues. A student evaluation was accomplished using a questionnaire that dealt with students' diverse backgrounds and their levels of English proficiency, along with the professors' judged competence and course content. A summary is presented of the responses from the 80 refugees, who ranged in age from 17 to 55 with a mean age of 22. Most students emigrated from Vietnam, but Laos and Cambodia were also well represented.

Trueba, Henry T
BILINGUAL BILCULTURAL EDUCATION FOR CHICANOS IN THE SOUTH WEST
1973; 13 pp.

The United States Office of Education defines bilingual bicultural education as the use of two languages (one of which is English) in a well-organized programme which would include the history and culture associated with the student's native language. In this paper, some Chicano perceptions of Southwestern bilingual bicultural education are reviewed. Bilingual bilcultural education is viewed in the framework of the Chicano's cultural experiences; the different education philosophies reflected by Chicano educators; and the expectations of Chicano educators. Life histories of 15 Chicano teachers and their relatives and interviews with 40 of the 125 bilingual bicultural teachers trained in the Mexican American Education Project at California State University, Sacramento, during the previous five years were used. The topics discussed include: the socio-cultural experience of the Chicano; types, scope and impact of bilingual bicultural education; the new bilingual bicultural education programme in the planning stage; the legitimacy and acceptability of bilingual bicultural education; and unresolved problems of bilingual bicultural education for Chicanos. The views of the teachers who participated in the Mexican American Education Project during 1971-73 are summarised.

Williams, Brett
WHY MIGRANT WOMEN MAKE THEIR HUSBANDS TAMALES
1975; 15 pp.

See under WOMEN

Willie, Charles v. and Greenblatt, Susan L
THE STAGES IN A SCHOLAR'S LIFE
Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1981; 352 pp.

See under EDUCATION

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7. WOMEN

Armstrong, M. Jocelyn
'Ethnicity and Sex-role Socialisation: A Comparative Example Using Life History Data from Hawaii'
SEX ROLES: A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH
vol. 10, nos.3-4, February 1984; pp. 157-181

See under RACE

Baker, Therese L
'Class, Family, Education and the Process of Status Attainment: A Comparison of American and British Women College Graduates'
Paper delivered at Annual Meeting of American Sociological Association, New York, August 1980; 19 pp.

This study of women college graduates in the United States and Great Britain analyses the effect of social origins and familial factors on educational attainment. The sample consisted of 1,435 American and 1,805 British females who graduated in 1961 and 1960 respectively. Longitudinal data were drawn from the National Opinion Research Center and a study by Keith Kelsall at Sheffield University. The study examined the women's life histories at the time of university graduation, their educational attainment, and their marital and fertility characteristics seven years after graduation. Results indicate that the British graduates had achieved higher socio-economic status attainment than had the Americans. The data revealed that attainment patterns for American and British women are quite different. The class of degree achieved and undergraduate specialisation in the natural sciences or mathematics have an important effect on British women, whereas family background characteristics and characteristics of the undergraduate experience are significant for American women. Also, the status of the undergraduate university is not as influential for American women as it is for British women. In addition,, British women tend to forego mothering for a career while American women tend to combine the two. Major differences seem to be a result of early selection for academic training in Great Britain which lends a power to the holders that carries over into occupational careers.

Feild, Hubert S
'Predicting Women's College Experiences from Life History Data: A Four-Year Study'
RESEARCH INTO HIGHER EDUCATION
vol. 5, no.2, 1976; pp. 125-140

The use of life history or biographical information to predict various college experiences of women was examined in this study of 327 women. The results indicated that life history data could be used to make longitudinal predictions and are discussed in terms of their implications for counselling students in higher education.

Frisbie, Charlotte J
'Traditional Navajo Women: Ethnographic and Life History Portrayals'
AMERICAN INDIAN QUARTERLY, vol.6, nos.1-2, Spring-Summer 1982; pp. 11-33

Designed to attempt an assessment of the quality and quantity of information on traditional Navajo women in view of feminist concerns about the treatment of women in ethnography, drawing on data from ten basic ethnographies on the Navajos and fourteen published life histories of Navajo men and women are explored.

Gigy, Lynn L
'Reconstruction of the Personal Past: Differences in Older Women'
Paper delivered to 30th Conference of the Gerontological
Society, San Francisco, November 1978; 15 pp.

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Graham, Hilary
'Surveying through Stories'
in Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (eds), SOCIAL RESEARCHING: POLITICS, PROBLEMS, PRACTICE
Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984; pp. 104-124

See under METHODOLOGY

Karelius, Karen
WOMEN'S WORKSHOPS
1977; 23 pp

The Women's workshop Notebook is the tool used in the nine-week course designed for the mature woman returning to school at Antelope Valley College. The notebook exercises along with the group interaction and instruction stress the importance of personal assessment of strengths, weaknesses, dreams, deliberations and life history in decision-making. The assumption is that a woman must know her assets, limitations, and ambitions before she can effectively and fruitfully engage in career, personal, or educational re-direction. Because women possess varied and complex personalities, the exercises ranging from the management survey to the personal history journal experience, are aimed at altering each woman to another aspect of her self. The versatility of the exercises duplicated in the notebook makes them useful at other times of transition in the woman's life.

Kummerow, Jean M and Hummel, Thomas J
'A Study of Variables relating to Women's Vocational Patterns: A Fifteen Year Follow-Up'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association,
Washington DC, March 30-April 3 1975;
18 pp.

A Vocational Pattern Index based on Zytowski's (1969) postulates on women's vocational participation, was developed. This index is based on age of first entry into job market, number of entries, years of work, and degree of participation. Fifteen years after graduation from the University of Minnesota, a questionnaire requesting detailed work, educational, and family life histories and various attitudes was sent to 143 females. One hundred and nine of these women responded. The relationship between the Vocational Pattern Index and 27 variables was studied using multiple regression. Number of children was found to be the best predictor of vocational pattern.

Lally, Maureen et. al.
'Older women in Single Room Occupant (SRO) Hotels: A Seattle Profile'
GERONTOLOGIST, vol. 19, no.1, February 1979; pp. 67-73

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Maines, David R et.al.
ATTRITION PROCESSES OUT OF MATHEMATICS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: ATTRITION FROM MATHEMATICS AS A SOCIAL PROCESS. FINAL REPORT.
Northwestern University Program on Women, Evanston, Illinois, 1983; 82 pp.

Investigated in this study were those long-term processes which contribute to high rates of attrition for women out of mathematics. It is based on the contention that university students drop out of mathematics as a consequence of prior socialisation, educational career contingencies, and goal commitment and career aspirations, with the mix of these factors different for men and women. A life history approach was used, tracing any pattern of participation throughout a person's life which could be regarded as an aspect of the decision processes. Related literature is reviewed and the theoretical framework is described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the procedures used to gather and organise information. Chapter 4 presents sample background characteristics, while chapter 5 lists the major findings. Neither ability nor sex alone can account for the attrition process; rather. it is caught up in a complex pattern of interactive effects. These are presented in some detail (including eleven statistical tables) and conclusions are drawn in the final chapter. Sample interview questions are included in an appendix.

Metcalf, Ann Rosenthal
'Effects of Boarding School on Navajo Maternal Attitudes and Behaviour'
Paper delivered to the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Toronto, November 1972; 10 pp.

An investigation of long term effects of boarding school education was conducted among Navajo women who had attended boarding school on their reservation during the 1950s. Subjects were 23 Navajo mothers and, for 17 mothers, their pre-school children; all lived in the San Francisco Bay area. A series of open-ended interviews obtained information on each mother's life history, school background, and child-rearing practices. An in-home testing session included a variety of self-image and attitude measures for the mothers and systematic observations of mother-child interactions during structured and unstructured activity. Women who had spent at least one full year of middle childhood (ages 7-14) at home without school experience (i.e. neither boarding nor day school) scored significantly higher than their boarding school counterparts on self-image instruments and on a maternal competence scale independent of the mother's age, the age of her first child, or her feelings toward the parental home. Observations of mother-child interactions showed no difference in the overt child care behaviours of the mothers; however, the dimension of 'self satisfaction' displayed in children's behaviour was significantly associated with the mother's background; mothers with at least one year at home during middle childhood had children who appeared more content.

Olson, Deborah L
'The Education of Disabled Girls: Personal Experiences and Reflections'
Paper delivered to the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 16-20 1986; 15 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Owings, Jeffrey A, et. al.
'The Impact of Motherhood on the Career Pattern of Working Women: Differences in the Life Histories and Career Status of Employed Mothers and Working Women without Children'
Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 8, 1980; 17 pp.

This study compared employed mothers with working women who do not have children along dimensions reflective of their life histories and labour market experiences. It utilised data from two nationwide longitudinal surveys - the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women aged 14 to 24 and the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1972. Cross-tabulations between selected, theoretically relevant variables were performed, and various measures of association were obtained. This series of analyses focused on differences in occupational status and aspirations, and personal attitudes of employed mothers and employed women without children. A regression analysis was undertaken to determine which variable would be predictors of the dichotomous variable indicating whether a woman is a mother, when their overlapping effects are controlled. Statistical analyses did not contradict the suggestions of theorists in vocational development that employed mothers have many obstacles to surmount as their careers develop. They were more likely to come from lower socio-economic levels, have completed fewer years of education, and to be available to work only part-time. (Twenty-three statistical tables are appended).

Pitman, Mary Anne
'Continuing Education for Women - Checkmate?'
EDUCATIONAL HORIZONS, vol.64, no.3, Spring 1986; pp. 123-126

See under ADULT EDUCATION

Rounds, James B et. al.
'Life History Correlates of Vocational Needs for a Female Adult Sample'
JOURNAL OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
vol. 46, no.5, October 1978; pp. 487-496

Explored the relationship between vocational need and experiential factors and constructed a weighted biographical information form to predict vocational needs. Analysis showed the utility of this form as a measure of vocational needs.

Spence, Donald L and Lonner, Thomas D
'Career Set: A Resource Through Transitions and Crises'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol. 9, no. 1; 1978; pp. 51-63

Life histories of 27 white, middle-aged, middle class, American mothers were analysed for career-like components. Motherhood dominates these women but is only one of several careers in their lives, The career set acts as a social and personal resource, providing consistent and continuous meaning throughout major periods of time.

Stringer-Moore, Donna M
'Uses of Assertiveness Training for Women in Midlife Crises'
Paper delivered to 89th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association,
August 24-26 1981; 10 pp.

Midlife crises require different behavioural responses for women who have made decisions about marriage, motherhood, and career. For women experiencing midlife crises, assertiveness training has the potential to resolve conflicts. Assertiveness training (AT) consists of three components: skills training, anxiety reduction, and cognitive restructuring. The three major settings in which assertiveness training can occur include therapy, training and self-help. Assertiveness training can help women deal with such problems as compassion traps, depression, new responsibilities, dating, job-related conflicts, and self-esteem. For each problem, the AT component receiving most stress by the therapist and the order in which the components are introduced should be determined by the nature of the problem and the life history of the individual.

Tate, Lenore Artie
'Life Satisfaction and Death Anxiety in Aged Women'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol. 15, no.4, 1982; pp. 299-306

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Thoen, Gail Ann
ASIAN REFUGEE STUDENTS: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING FOR AMERICA'S NEWEST IMMIGRANTS
Department of Family Life, University of Minnesota, 1982; 14 pp.

See under RACE

Troll, Lillian E
'Poor, Dumb and Ugly: The Older Woman in Contemporary Society'
Paper delivered to 92nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association,
Toronto, August 24-28 1984;
20 pp.

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Williams, Brett
WHY MIGRANT WOMEN MAKE THEIR HUSBANDS TAMALES
1975; 15 pp.

Family life among the poor has been the subject of many stereotypes, which often focus on the failure of poor families to conform to middle-class structures and muster sympathies for members of one sex at the expense of the other. Chicano migrants' large extended families are often labelled 'stifling', and women's involvement in the lives of their kin is taken as evidence of their conservatism and oppression. That women especially nurture and defer to their husbands leads observers to dichotomise migrants as machos and martyrs; brutish husbands allegedly dominate wives who are suffocated by family life and bound by rural Mexican tradition. But the stark poverty and limited upward mobility of migrants' lives mean that individuals realistically find their greatest security in gathering and binding kin whom they can count on for emotional and economic support. Women especially are critical: liaisons among kin, working to ensure their lifelong involvement in one another's travels and concerns. Marriage is a special case of such kin-work, and three life histories of migrant women reveal the real complexity of their conjugal relations.

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8. SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, WORK AND VOCATIONAL ISSUES

Blum, Zahava D
INCOME CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE: A COMPARISON OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971; 69 pp.

See under RACE

Borman, Kathryn M (ed), et. al.
THE ADOLESCENT WORKER
National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1985; 237 pp.

The Adolescent Worker Study was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the job experiences and related life histories of out-of-school working youth. To do this, a team of investigators first identified work sites across a range of industrial sectors that were currently engaged in hiring young workers between the ages of 17 and 21. Then the team engaged the participation of the next young person to be hired in each work site. As a result, 25 case histories were compiled and analysed. The case studies of youth in work settings provided an anthology of the meaning of work for adolescents employed in organisationally and technologically diverse work settings. The research has uncovered the nature of workplace processes affecting all young workers' job experience and future mobility, namely, finding a job, combatting negative attributions, fitting into a job, receiving training, negotiating authority, and quitting or losing a job. Although it is difficult to generalise, the research indicates that accounts of the transition to work by out-of-school, non-college-educated youth must consider at least these six processes. All young people entering jobs can benefit by understanding that these six dimensions of job-related experiences are likely to become issues at some point in their work lives.

Blum, Zahava D
INCOME CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE: A COMPARISON OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971; 69 pp.

See under RACE

Blum, Zahava and Coleman James D
LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON THE INCOMES AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1970; 69 pp.

See under RACE

Coleman, James S
A FLOW MODEL OF OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURES
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1971; 34 pp.

See under RACE

Coleman, James S et. al.
OCCUPATIONAL STATUS CHANGES FOR BLACKS AND NONBLACKS DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1970; 66 pp.

See under RACE

Fruehling, Rosemary T.
A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. A FINAL REPORT
Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Minnesota State Department of Education, St. Paul, 1980; 280 pp.

See under EDUCATION

Frye, Roland
ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS OF LIFE HISTORY ANTECEDENTS OF EXECUTIVES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES
Creativity Research Institute, Richardson Foundation, Greensborough, North Carolina, 1967; 83 pp.

To determine if there were differences in the factor structure of biographical information data of executives, it was hypothesised that factor structure would be related to functional assignment and the emphasis given that function by the organisation. A survey questionnaire was administered to 382 Latin American executives. A principal component factor analysis with an orthogonal rotation was performed, and regression weights were determined for each item on these factors: (1) upward mobility through educational achievement, (2) self-description in terms of world of reality and concrete areas, (3) self-perception on personal ability and achievement in relations in social activities, (4) attitudes toward family, and (5) interpersonal relations in social activities. This study suggested that the structure of an industrial organisation determines the type of person who will reach executive level. The person's characteristics will be affected by the original assignment. It was demonstrated that factor scores describe people better than discrete, life-history items.

Iaffaldano, Michelle et. al.
'Life History Antecedents of Vocational Indecision'
JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR
vol. 27, no.3, December 1985; pp. 276-297

Assesses the validity of using systematic life history information to predict three vocational decision-making criteria in 200 college students: vocational decidedness and its two components, vocational identity and vocational maturity. Significant typologies were identified. However, results indicated that the overall construct of vocational decidedness differs somewhat for males and females.

Karweit, Nancy
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER ATTAINMENT: DETERMINANTS AND OCCUPATIONAL EFFECTS OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1979; 351 pp.

See under ADULT EDUCATION

Knapp, Charles B and Hansen, W. Lee
'Earnings and Individual Variations in Postschool Investment'
JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, vol.84, 1976; pp. 351-358

Examines the effect of earnings of variations among individuals in post-school human investment (namely, in work experience after the completion of schooling). Data from the John Hopkins Retrospective Life History Survey are analysed to make possible a reformulation of Becker and Chiswick's econometric model to allow for additional variations within age-education groups in the amounts of their post-school investment.

Kummerow, Jean M and Hummel, Thomas J
'A Study of Variables relating to Women's Vocational Patterns: A Fifteen Year Follow-Up'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington DC, March 30-April 3 1975; 18 pp.

See under WOMEN

Muchinsky, Paul M
'Vocational Behaviour and Career Development, 1982: A Review'
JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR
vol. 23, no. 2, October 1983; pp. 123-178

Reviews 278 studies published on vocational behaviour and career development in 1982, in the following major categories: discrimination; performance; turn-over; satisfaction; commitment and involvement; job analysis and evaluation; selection; life history experiences; performance appraisal; assessment centers; training; unions; alternative work schedules; job design; pay; motivation; leadership; and stress.

Mumford, Michael D and Owens, William A
'Life History and Vocational Interests'
JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR,
vol.21, no.3, December 1982; pp. 330-348

To obtain information concerning the antecedents of various forms of vocational interests, scores on the 22 basic interest scales of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank were correlated with 389 life history or autobiographical data items. Presents and discusses clusters obtained for the business management, science, and adventure scales.

Ornstein, Michael D
ENTRY INTO THE AMERICAN LABOR FORCE
Center for Study of Social Organizations of Schools, John Hopkins University, 1971; 470 pp.

See under RACE

Otto, Luther B, et. al.
DESIGN FOR A STUDY OF ENTRY INTO CAREERS
Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, Nebraska, 1979; 91 pp.

Research conducted to investigate the process by which individuals gain access to careers. (Career is defined as empirically determined regularities in job sequences.) The research programme is organised around two phases of analysis. The first phase involved empirically constructing multi-dimensional career lines through extensive synthetic cohort analysis of the 1970 Census Public Use Samples. The outcomes are a large number of empirically linked job sequences that describe changes and stabilities in the jobs of men and women that are formed by institutional and labour market structures. The concepts and career line information from the first phase served as the major dependent variables for the second phase of the study, which investigates how individuals gain access to careers through entry portals through ages 18-30. The second phase involved measures of life-course concepts that affect an individual's access to careers. The sample used included 6,795 males and females who were juniors and seniors in public high schools in the state of Washington from 1965-66. The data from each individual's life history is interfaced with the career line information through the match of individual jobs and career line entry portals. The complementary data provides the variation in individual access to a career line that can predict, model, and explain. Areas of policy significance have been identified, and plans for disseminating the information have been outlined.

Owings, Jeffrey A et. al.
'The Impact of Motherhood on the Career Pattern of Working Women: Differences in the Life Histories and Career Status of Employed Mothers and Working Women without Children'
Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 8, 1980; 17 pp.

See under WOMEN

Ramsoy, Nathalie Rogoff
'On Social Stratification in a Temporal Framework: A Comment on Keyfitz'
Paper delivered to Conference on Education, Inequality and Life Chances, Paris, January 6-10 1975; 15 pp.

The issue addressed in this paper concerns one particular aspect of sociological theory and method in the analysis of social inequality. While not often made explicit, a temporal aspect is built into the sociological notion of social stratification as a general and comprehensive phenomenon, under which many observable forms of inequality may be subsumed. The recent advance in stratification analysis, consisting of more adequate and clearer formulations of the time dimension, is put forward and discussed. Among the various issues that are addressed are various conceptions or paradigms of social stratification, the usefulness of a biographical framework or life history as a tool of investigation, the concept of the cohort (or the age class of persons who move through the life cycle in the same span of calendar time) and models of inequality of social opportunity. Data are also presented for a research design that uses a retrospective life history, allowing for an analysis of equality of opportunity, or achievement, and of distribution of life chances very much within the temporal and causal framework of other models. This design is also able to estimate coefficients of the types of parameters suggested by other models. A causal temporal framework is not many steps removed from a confrontation with history - from which the study of social stratification should indeed not be remote.

Ramsoy, Nathalie R. and Clausen, Sten E
'Events as Units of Analysis in Life History Studies'
A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR THE NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS OF OF LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCE: REPORT ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL'S CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS, October 1977, Part IV
Social Science Research Council, Washington DC Center for Co-ordination of Research on Social Indicators, 1978

See under METHODOLOGY

Rounds, James B, et. al.
'Life History Correlates of Vocational Needs for a Female Adult Sample'
JOURNAL OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY
vol. 26, no. 6, November 1979; pp 487-496

This article explores the relationship between vocational needs and experiential factors and constructed a weighted biographical information form to predict vocational needs. Analysis shows the utility of this form as a measure of vocational needs.

Slawski, Carl
IDENTITY BARGAINING: A POLICY SYSTEMS RESEARCH MODEL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT
1976; 51 pp.

A detailed, general and comprehensive accounting scheme is presented, consisting of nine stages of career development, three major sets of elements contributing to career choice (in terms of personal, cultural and situational roles), and 20 hypotheses relating to separate elements. Implicit in the model is a novel procedure and method for systematically analysing biographies and life histories in a way that will not only help to codify the data but will also shed light on the sociological and social psychological factors underlying such lives. The aim of this approach is to facilitate understanding and research on persons in social context with a view to promoting more serious, more informed decisions about their lives, decisions made not only by administrators of government and personnel managers but by persons themselves.

Sorensen, Aage B.
'The Structure of Intragenerational Mobility'
AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW, vol.40, no.4, 1975; pp. 456-471

Analyses mobility rates for black and white men using life-history data on intra-generational mobility. A stochastic model of mobility is derived from a simple model for the occupational achievement process. The proposed model is said to describe observed changes in mobility over time reasonably well.

Sorensen, Aage B and Tuma, Nancy Brandon
'Labour Market Structures and Job Mobility'. Discussion Paper no. 505-78
Paper delivered at 9th World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, Sweden, August 14-19 1978;
50 pp.

In this paper it is argued that there are fundamental differences among labour markets in the mechanisms that create the observed associations between socio-economic attainment and the characteristics of individuals, and that these differences result from the nature of the employment relationship in different labour markets. In open-employment relationships, which predominate in secondary labour markets, employees are exposed to competition from other workers, and marginal productivity/human capital theory applies. In closed-employment relationships, which characterise primary labour markets, when employees are protected from competition, and change in attainment takes place when employees obtain access to vacant jobs better than their current job. Evidence for different types of employment relationships in different labour markets is obtained from an analysis of job shifts using life history data on white men aged 30-39 in 1969. This analysis focuses on the transition rates to better and worse jobs as a function of personal resources, current job rewards, and the type of employment relationship.

Spence, Donald L and Lonner, Thomas D
'Career Set: A Resource Through Transitions and Crises'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
vol. 9, no. 1; 1978; pp. 51-63

See under WOMEN

Umeda, John K and Frey, David H
'Life History Correlates of Ministerial Success'
JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOUR
vol. 4, no.3, 1974; pp. 319-324

Life history or biodata correlates of ministerial success were investigated for a group of 92 Seventh-Day Adventist ministers. Two significant bivariate correlations indicated that successful ministers chose their career later than less successful ones and that earning college expenses was predictive of success.

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9. EDUCATION

Baker, Therese L
'Class, Family, Education and the Process of Status Attainment: A Comparison of American and British Women College Graduates'
Paper delivered to the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York, August 1980; 19 pp.

See under WOMEN

Ball, Stephen J and Goodson, Ivor F (eds)
TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS
Issues in Education and Training Series No. 3, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; 279 pp.

This volume explores the contemporary situation of teachers' careers and teachers' lives in the context of falling rolls, educational cuts and government demands for fundamental change in educational processes in Britain. Each of the eleven papers is based on recent or ongoing empirical research, employing qualitative observation or life history interviews methods. They reflect the words, experiences and problems facing teachers in the schools in the 1980s. The authors include a brief discussion of the life history method in their introduction (pp.12-18) and four of the papers draw specifically on life history research (Sikes, Measor, Beynon and Smith *et. al.*). The book offers significant conceptual development in the study of teachers' careers.

Beynon, John
'Institutional Change and Career Histories in a Comprehensive School' in Stephen J. Ball and Ivor F. Goodson (eds), TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS
Issues in Education and Training Series No.3, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 158-179

This paper examines teachers' careers in a single institutional setting, using life history techniques, and the author is able to demonstrate the importance of institutional history in the making and breaking of teachers' lives and careers.

Blum, Zahava and Coleman James D
LONGITUDINAL EFFECTS OF EDUCATION ON THE INCOMES AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE OF BLACKS AND WHITES
Center for the Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1970; 69 pp.

See under RACE

Brush, Donald H and Schoenfeldt, Lyle F
'Interrelationships among Interests, Life History, and Educational Criteria'
APPLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT
vol. 3, no. 2, Spring 1979; pp. 165-175

The relationships among measures of vocational interest, life history data, educational performance, and number of courses taken (by area) were explored in a college freshman sample of 1,892 students. Canonical correlation analysis was used to uncover and describe the major relationships among the variable sets.

Clark, Christopher M and Florio, Susan
DIARY TIME: THE LIFE HISTORY OF AN OCCASION FOR WRITING.
Research Series no. 106, Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1981; 29 pp.

Opportunities for and limits upon diary writing in one second/third-grade classroom are examined with the purpose of stimulating critical thinking about two issues: (1) the diary's potential within the school writing curriculum, and (2) the classroom as an environment for the teaching and learning of writing. Field notes, teacher journal entries, and student diary entries demonstrate how diary time was started, modified and sustained. The activity is analysed in terms of teacher planning, implementation, audience, and the function of diary writing for young children. Conflicting messages regarding issues of privacy, correctness and audience illustrate the complexity of carrying out this kind of writing occasion in an elementary school classroom and account for the eventual deletion of diary time from the schedule of classroom activities.

Cottle, Thomas J
BUSING
Beacon Press, Boston, 1976; 143 pp.

See under RACE

Ensminger, Margaret E, et. al.
'School and Family Origins of Delinquency: Comparisons by Sex'
Paper delivered to Conference of Society for Life History Research, Monterey, November 25 1982; 62 pp.

See under SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Feild, Hubert S
'Predicting Women's College Experiences from Life History Data: A Four-Year Study'
RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION, vol. 5, no.2, 1976; pp. 125-140

See under WOMEN

Feild, Hubert S
'Antecedent Life History and Students' Behaviour: A Canonical Correlation Analysis'
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN GUIDANCE
vol. 9, no. 4, 1977; pp. 192-198

A longitudinal study was conducted to determine whether students' life history or biographical data could be used to predict their experiences in college. Significant relationships were found between the students' life history data and their subsequent college experiences.

Flanagan, John C et. al.
DESIGNING THE STUDY. PROJECT TALENT MONOGRAPH SERIES
Monograph no. 1, Pittsburg University, 1960; 448 pp.

The steps in planning and carrying out the initial project are outlined. The project is aimed at providing a sound factual basis which would assist parents, teachers and school administrators in helping each individual to realise his greatest potential. Tests were devised to analyse aptitude, achievement, interest and personality. The two-day test battery included questionnaires on student background and life history. There were also measures of motivation, levels of vocational and economic aspiration, value systems, and personal plans. The tests were administered to approximately 440,000 high school students from a random sampling of all secondary schools in the United States. A follow-up study was to be made approximately one year after these students graduated. Results expected were - a set of standards for educational and psychological measurement, a comprehensive counselling guide, increased understanding of how young people choose their life work, and a better understanding of the educational experiences that prepare students for their life work.

Fruehling, Rosemary T
A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. A FINAL REPORT.
Division of Vocational and Technical Education, Minnesota State Department of Education, St. Paul, 1980; 280 pp.

A study was conducted to answer two main questions: (1) What are the vocational needs of high school students? and (2) What are the life history correlates of such vocational needs? Over 1,750 high school students in grades 8 to 11 were administered a measure of vocational needs, the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire, and a questionnaire designed to elicit life history information, the Student Information Blank. The results of the study contain preliminary evidence that suggests the existence of similar average patterns of needs across grade, sex, and sex-by-grade groups. It was found that the most important vocational need for all groups was ability utilisation. In addition, the findings contained preliminary evidence that background data are related to vocational needs. However, while there was evidence linking background data meaningfully to vocational needs, there was little evidence to support the generalisability of findings across groups. (The Student Information Blank, data collection exhibits, and summary statistical data are all appended).

Georgia State Department
EVALUATION OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA'S GOVERNOR'S HONORS PROGRAM
Office of Instructional Services, Georgia State Department of Education, Atlanta/College of Education, Georgia University, Athens, 1972; 208 pp.

The Georgia Governor's Honors Program (GHP), an intense eight-week summer programme for academically and artistically gifted incoming high school juniors and seniors, was evaluated. Areas of programme investigated were: (1) nature and effectiveness of the instructional experiences, (2) post-programme behaviour for both faculty and students, which were judged related to the summer experience, and (3) personality and life history characteristics of attendees. Four major types of evaluation studies were undertaken: Context Evaluation, Input Evaluation, Process Evaluation, and Product Evaluation. The bulk of the report discusses the foure valuation studies. The 21 conclusions reached as a result of the studies are provided. In general, it is believed that the general thrust of the programme has successfully aimed at providing an enriching experience for talented adolescents. It is felt, however, that the programme has been less successful in (1) providing innovative impetus toward the local development of methods and materials for the gifted, (2) offering a training ground for prospective teachers and counsellors of the gifted, and (3) undertaking a meaningful and continuous programme of relevant research. Staff recommendations concerning student selection and the programme and student programme recommendations, comments and suggestions are provided. Fifty tables provide the evaluation data and instructional objectives.

Gibson, Margaret A and Arvizu, Steven F
DEMYSTIFYING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
Monograph II, Bilingual Education Training Series, Cross-Cultural Resource Center,
California State University, Sacramento, 1978; 67 pp.

This monograph describes techniques and methods which may be used by parents, teachers, and other educators who are working to make schools more responsive to students from different language and cultural backgrounds. Emphasis is placed on the techniques and methods used by anthropological fieldworkers to study culture and their usefulness in solving culturally based educational problems. A review of the basic techniques includes a discussion of : (1) their purposes and strengths; (2) the steps involved in using them; (3) the limitations of various techniques and some cautions about their use; and (4) suggested learning projects which can be used by educators to practice the techniques. The basic techniques covered include participant observation, recording, interviewing, event analysis, life history, and written essays. Major phases in a research project and ethical issues which should be considered in such a project are also discussed.

Gold, Yvonne
'The Relationship of Six Personal and Life History Variables to Standing on Three Dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a Sample of Elementary and Junior High School Teachers'
EDUCATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASUREMENT
vol. 45, no. 2, Summer 1985; pp. 377-387

The degree of correlation between each of the six personal and life history variables to each of three subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory was investigated for classroom teachers. The personal and life history variables afforded low, but statistically significant, relationships with one or more of the three constructs of burnout.

Goodson , Ivor
'Life Histories and the Study of Schooling'
INTERCHANGE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY
vol. 11, no.4, 1980-81; pp. 62-76

See under METHODOLOGY

Goodson, Ivor
SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND CURRICULUM CHANGE
Croom Helm, London, 1982; 212 pp.

In conducting this study, the main aim was to examine the development of environmental studies as a new school subject. Goodson decided that the life history method was the most appropriate, and collected the life histories of the major participants in the promotion of this new subject, to obtain data on patterns of decision-making, changes in rationale, etc. Life history material was not the only data used, for so was other documentary data.

Goodson, Ivor
'History, Context and Qualitative Methods in the Study of Curriculum' in Robert G. Burgess (ed), STRATEGIES OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE METHODS
Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 121-151

Based on his study in *School Subjects and Curriculum Change*, Goodson argues for qualitative methodology and for broadening those methods to rehabilitate life stories and integrate studies of historical context. The reasons for concentrating on life story and curriculum history data are explored by analysing some of the inadequacies of research methods. The article includes an episode in a subject teacher's life to give a feel for the data, the way that life histories and historical context combine. Above all, the strength of beginning curriculum research from life history data is that from the outset the work is firmly focused on the working lives of practitioners. Some of the specific methodological problems are addressed.

Greene, Maxine
'How Do We Think About Our Craft?'
TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD, vol. 86, no.1, Fall 1984; pp. 55-67

This article encourages teachers to think about how they teach. Teachers must pay attention to their actions, interventions, and their own life history. The vision and value of teaching are explored.

Hatfield, Tim
'Alternate Generation Education: A Developmental Curriculum for Secondary Schools'
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF AGING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT,
vol. 19, no. 3, 1984; pp. 223-234

Describes the development of a high school curriculum designed to promote the psychological growth of students (n=51) in a course about life history interviewing with older adults. Results showed students had more positive attitudes toward older people following the course and were more psychologically mature.

Hoffnung, Robert J
FORM AS THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN COLLEGE TEACHING
1982; 25 pp.

The view of education as a liberating, enlightening, individuating process and educational approaches to support this goal are examined. According to Illich (1970), the social relations within the educational encounter have corresponded closely to the social relations of dominance, subordination, and motivation in the economic sphere. He calls this type of educational encounter the 'hidden curriculum'. It is suggested that unless explicitly examined and confronted, the formal aspects of classroom teaching function as a hidden curriculum that stands in opposition to the personal development and individuation of both students and teachers, and this situation also severely limits the teaching situation. it is proposed that teachers must come to expect that students are capable of being active, self-aware participants, creators of new understandings of the human condition. Classroom experiences at the University of Cincinnati, Yale University, and the University of New Haven are cited as illustrations of this point of view. The reasons why participants select a course and their expectations can serve as the historical context and the starting point for confronting the hidden curriculum. In the teaching of developmental psychology, the developmental life history of the student can serve as the stimulus for exploring the concepts of the course and dialogue. The role of small support groups and the issues of curriculum, texts and grades are addressed.

Jones, Franklin R and Heinen, James R K
STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND NON-GRADUATES BY AGE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVELS
1977; 16 pp.

A 1959 survey of eleven research studies involving mental health of United States citizenry showed that nine per cent of practising teachers were seriously maladjusted, 17 per cent were unusually nervous, and 25 per cent were unhappy, worried and dissatisfied. This study sought to update these findings by examining various stress factors and their relationship to the mental health of graduate students, school teachers, and the lay public. Measures of depression, perception, paranoia, and total scores as well as detailed life histories were obtained from approximately 500 volunteer subjects (ages 20-49) representing either graduate students from various academic disciplines or the lay public. Contrast of the profiles of the two groups was delineated. Analysis of variance was used to determine the salient factors of syndrome relating to stress and maladjustment. The instrument used for classification purposes was the Hoffer-Osmond Diagnostic Test. General data indicated that sixty per cent of the study population were normal while forty per cent were maladjusted. Age and sex differences are reported for both graduate students and lay subjects.

Karweit, Nancy
LIFE HISTORY DATA ON OCCUPATIONAL EFFECTS OF OBTAINING EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS THROUGH ALTERNATE ROUTES
Center for Study of Social Organizations of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1976; 168 pp.

See under METHODOLOGY

Magnusson, David
THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
Research and Development for Higher Education, Research and Development Unit, National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges, Stockholm, 1979; 25 pp.

A longitudinal study conducted since 1965 in Sweden has investigated the role of higher education in the life situation of the individual adult. Study objectives have been to: chart the actual educational and vocational decisions made by young people; study the expectations of the individual concerning education and working life; identify psychological, social, and economic factors influencing higher education study and life choices; analyse the changes undergone by individuals as a result of higher education (attitudes and values); relate the individual's perception of higher education study to various aspects of his/her life history; and develop a theoretical base comprising models and methods useful in integrating various approaches. A psychological cost-benefit analytical model was developed to describe the decision-making process at the individual level and to predict choices of post-secondary activity. Literature reviews were conducted in the fields of psychology, pedagogics, sociology and economics. Results of follow-up studies of pupils who left elementary school with no intention of adding to their education and additional studies of upper-secondary-school student experiences and perceptions are summarised. By 1980 the members of the study were about 25 years old and would have completed their initial education and become established in the labour market.

Maines, David R et. al.
ATTRITION PROCESSES OUT OF MATHEMATICS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: ATTRITION FROM MATHEMATICS AS A SOCIAL PROCESS. FINAL REPORT.
Northwestern University Program on Women, Evanston, Illinois, 1983; 82 pp.

See under WOMEN

Measor, Lynda
'Critical Incidents in the Classroom: Identities, Choices and Careers' in Stephen J. Ball and Ivor F. Goodson (eds), TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS
Issues in Education and Training Series No. 3, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 61-77

This project draws on data from an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project on teachers' careers and lives. The data is derived from life history interviews with experienced teachers who are looking back on their early days in the classroom and the problems they faced. The author argues that 'critical incidents' are key events in individuals' lives, which lead them to take particular kinds of action. Detailed descriptions of critical incidents in teachers' lives and careers are provided. Different types of critical incidents are identified: extrinsic, intrinsic, and personal. The analysis is derived from the life histories of art and science teachers, from three broad categories - retired, mid-career and young teachers. Discipline issues appeared to be a major concern for nearly all teachers.

Mehaffy, George L et. al.
ORAL HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM.
How To Do It Series, Series 2, No.8, National Council for Social Studies, Washington DC, 1979; 9 pp.

This booklet is designed to help social studies teachers initiate oral history projects. Preceding the two major sections of the document, the authors specify that oral history is more than a person with a tape-recorder; need not be transcribed to be useful; need not be a big project; and is not the final product of history. The next section describes projects that have proven to be successful: the life history, the family history, special oral history projects such as exploring topics in community social history, and field research into community political life and community folklore. Possibilities for end products of these projects include curriculum materials, community oral history archives, or a publication of a student journal. The final section provides suggestions for equipment, planning and procedures. The questions of legality, responsibilities, obligations, record keeping and storage, transcription, and preparing students to conduct interviews are examined. A sample release form for the interviewee, an oral history data sheet, and a selected bibliography are included.

Olson, Deborah L
'The Education of Disabled Girls: Personal Experiences and Reflections'
Paper delivered at the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 16-20 1986; 15 pp.

Data for this paper were taken from a study in progress on the life histories of women labelled mentally retarded and were derived from 25 hours of in-depth interviews with two women aged 32 and 19 who also had cerebral palsy. Both of these women experienced special education classrooms throughout their educational careers. Gender issues in the special education classroom, peer influence and relationships, and teacher-student relationships were among areas covered in the interviews. A major difference between the two subjects was that one went to a school which was only for children with disabilities, while the other subject started school the year that Public Law 94-142 (Education for All

Handicapped Children Act) was implemented. Both subjects felt that school did not prepare them for the real world; both were still struggling to adjust to the work world and to find appropriate employment. The study results suggest the importance of interaction of the disabled with non-handicapped peers and point out the lack of strong role models for handicapped females. It is concluded that career opportunities, vocational experiences, and training should begin early and continue throughout the high school years and that parents, school personnel and disabled consumers of services should work together to transition the student to the adult world of work or further education.

Ready, Timothy
'Learning to Adapt: Influences upon the Learning Behaviour of Adolescents in a South Texas City'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of American Anthropological Association, December 5 1982; 21 pp.

Both Mexican American and Anglo students in four Corpus Christi (Texas) High Schools seek membership in various subcultures according to which recognises them as being socially competent and respectable human beings. Data consist of life history interviews, observations, and questionnaire responses from over 600 youths. Mexican American students have more difficulties conforming to the 'official' norms of school and society than Anglos, although they are no less likely to embrace those norms as ideal. Also, Mexican American youth are more likely to be denied the respect and esteem of their peers and their teachers. Faced with the need to adapt to the reality of the school and the environment, members of both Mexican American and Anglo groups, however, tend to become identified with one of six subcultures: 'preppies', college-bound children of professionals; 'kickers', cowboys with little concern for school; 'achievement motivated strivers', working-class youth dedicated to upward mobility; 'dues payers', working-class youth who are serious and respectful, but who do not do well at school; 'good timers', who pay little attention to school norms; and Chicanos, who refuse to conform to the norms of middle-class Anglo society.

Rest, James R.
'The Impact of Higher Education and Moral Judgment Development'
Project Report 1. University of Minnesota, 1979; 80 pp.

The document discusses the nature of moral judgment, reviews previous studies which link higher education to moral judgment, and presents results of a longitudinal study comparing colleges and non-college subjects. This project report from the Higher Education and Cognitive-Social Development Project at the University of Minnesota is presented in three sections. In Section I the motivational and cognitive theories of moral education are discussed. In the motivational theory, the goal of moral education is to change the individual's motives from selfish, impulsive, and unsocial to altruistic, disciplined, and social. The cognitive theory portrays the goal of education as developing the individual's understanding about how people interact with each other. Lawrence Kohlberg's six stages of moral development and a review of research on cognitive development are presented. Section II summarises research on the impact of higher education on moral judgment as measured by the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which constitutes the largest data base on a single measure of moral judgment. Results indicate that changes in moral development occur over long periods of time and apparently not through the teaching of specific doctrines. Section III reports results of a longitudinal study by the author to determine if college students show greater gains in moral judgment development than non-college subjects. The 59 subjects were tested during High School, two years after, then four years after the initial test. Thirty-eight subjects had gone to college, eighteen had not (for three subjects the classification was ambiguous). Participants in the third testing completed the DIT, the Comprehension of Moral Concepts Test, Law and Order Political Attitudes, and a life history. Results indicate that higher education fosters development in moral judgment, particularly at the four year mark.

Scott, Owen et. al.
'Student Characteristics Associated with Student Perceptions of College Instruction'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of National Council on Measurement in Education, Chicago, April 15 1974; 12 pp.

Using data obtained from 51 male and 133 female undergraduates enrolled in six classes in educational psychology, the authors obtained evidence supporting the existence of slight sex differences in descriptions or appraisals of instruction and also suggesting a relationship between the overall past achievement of the males and their perceptions of the quality of classroom interpersonal relations. No relationships were found between students' life histories and their perceptions of instruction or between their level of creativity and perceptions of instruction. These results support some previous studies cited and do not support others, also cited. This study lends some support to those who question the internal validity of the claim that differences in students' perceptions of instruction necessarily reflect differences in the effectiveness of instruction.

Scott, Owen et. al.
'Relationships between Students' Perceptions of College Instruction and Selected Students' Characteristics'
PERCEPTUAL AND MOTOR SKILLS, vol. 39, no. 2, 1974; pp. 855-860

Examines the relationship between college students' perceptions of college instruction and their own characteristics of sex, creativity, life history, and academic achievement.

Scott, Owen and Castles, Janet
'Prior Achievement and Life History Factors as Predictors of the Grade Point Averages of High School Seniors'
PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORTS, vol. 35, no. 1, Part 1, 1974;
pp. 131-134

The objectives of the study were to ascertain the effectiveness of seventh grade performance on a standardised achievement test and of selected items of life history information as predictors of the cumulative senior high school grade point average.

Scott, Owen and Castles, Janet
'Aptitude, Motivation, and Life History as Predictors of the Non-Academic Accomplishments of High School Seniors'
MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN GUIDANCE
vol. 8, no. 1, 1975; pp. 37-41

The purpose of the research was to ascertain the effectiveness of academic aptitude measures, measures of school motivation, and life history factors as predictors of the accomplishments of high school seniors, attained outside their formal programmes of study, measured by responses to the Talented Accomplishments Questionnaire.

Sikes, Patricia J.
'The Life Cycle of the Teacher' in Stephen J. Ball and Ivor F. Goodson (eds), TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS
Issues in Education and Training Series, No. 3, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 27-60;
A revised version appears in Patricia J. Sikes, Lynda Measor and Peter Woods, TEACHER CAREERS: CRISES AND CONTINUITIES
Issues in Education and Training Series, No.5, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 23-56

This paper draws on the same ESRC-funded project as Measor's article. The author uses life history data to follow the life cycle of the teacher from the probationary year through to retirement. This is seen to pass through five overlapping phases, which are linked to age groups: (1) 21-28; (2) 28-33; (3) 30-40; (4) 40-50/55; and (5) 50/55 plus. Aspects of the occupational culture appear to influence teachers' experiences of growing old, and understanding of this assists in viewing schools as social systems, and enables teachers to compare and share and learn from other teachers' experiences and feelings. In addition, it gives some indication of the effect that age and experience can have on motivation and commitment.

Sikes, Patricia J, Measor, Lynda and Woods, Peter
TEACHER CAREERS: CRISES AND CONTINUITIES
Issues in Education and Training Series, No. 5, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; 263 pp.

This book develops a model of the life cycle of the teacher, and shows how 'critical incidents' affect passage through it. It explores how teachers view coping with problems and constraints, and how they adapt to the teacher role. It examines institutional contexts for their effect on teacher careers, and explores other factors (such as teaching subject, pupils, personal life) that seemed to the teachers concerned to have a bearing on the nature and direction of those careers. These include the concentration on teachers' own subjective perceptions, over the whole range of the teacher's life, and the use of the life history method - all of which has yielded new research data, suggesting a new theoretical departure for this area of research.

Sitton, Thad
'Oral Life History: From Tape Recorder to Typewriter'
SOCIAL STUDIES, vol. 72, no.3, May-June 1981; pp. 120-126

See under METHODOLOGY

Smith, Louis M and Kleine, Paul F
INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION. KENSINGTON REVISITED: A FIFTEEN YEAR FOLLOW-UP OF AN INNOVATIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND ITS FACULTY. VOLUME V - EDUCATIONAL INNOVATORS THEN AND NOW: THE ORIGINAL FACULTY OF THE KENSINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. FINAL REPORT.
Graduate Institute of Education, Washington University, St. Louis, 1983; 530 pp.

This fifth volume of a six-volume study of a school district code-named 'Milford' sketches life histories and careers of the school's original faculty some fifteen years after the school was founded. Section I outlines the study's problems and procedures; describes the faculty as a group of true believers initially characterised by humour, inexperience, creativity, and intelligence; and briefly considers the study's methodology and sources, which included open-ended interviews and various writings. Composed of five major subsections devoted to interpretive life history themes, Section II discusses recurring themes and patterns in the educational careers of administrators and male and female teachers; examines connections between life histories and careers, and careers and belief systems; and details of the 'natural history' of belief systems (involving, for example, the perception of educational reform as a kind of secular religion and the maintenance of educational ideology). The final section offers summary discussions of the value of research as an innovatory educational activity, unresolved issues in educational innovation, and the concept of success in the context of the Kensington experience. In order to protect the anonymity of the school district studied in such detail, pseudonyms have been used for all place names (school, school district, city, county, state) and personal names (school superintendents, school board members, teachers, students) appearing in the various volumes of this set.

Smith, Louis M et. al.
INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION. KENSINGTON REVISITED: A FIFTEEN YEAR FOLLOW-UP OF AN INNOVATIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND ITS FACULTY. VOLUME VI - CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: THE INTERSECT OF THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, HISTORICAL METHODS AND LIFE HISTORY RESEARCH. FINAL REPORT.
Graduate Institute of Education, Washington University, St. Louis, 1983; 370 pp.

This final volume of a six-volume study of an elementary school called 'Kensington' in a school district code- named 'Milford', examines its own assumptions and procedures. After the brief introductory chapter, which presents the methodological appendixes of the preceding volumes as a serial, Chapter 2 discusses exploratory and final proposals for the study and its follow-up relation to an earlier study ('Middletown in Transition'). Chapter 3, 'Ethnography as an Intellectual Process', examines the study's evolving logic; accidents, anomalies and serendipity; the observer's role; and archival case records. Chapter 4 expands the third chapter's focus on ethnography to include separate sections on 'Ethnography', 'Ethnography and Historical Method', and 'Educational Innovation and Life History'. This final volume concludes with a chapter on 'Paradigms in Debate'.

Smith, Louis M et. al.
'Reconstructing Educational Innovation'
TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD, vol. 86, no 1, Fall 1984;
pp.20-33

A follow-up study on the Kensington Elementary School indicated a need for restructuring of educational innovation methods. In developing theory and practice dealing with innovation, technological, political and cultural perspectives and history and life-history approaches are useful.

Smith, Louis M, Klein, Paul F. Dwyer, David C, and Prunty, John J
'Educational Innovators: A Decade and a Half Later' in Stephen J. Ball and Ivor F. Goodson (eds), TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS
Issues in Education and Training Series, No. 3, Falmer Press, Lewes, 1985; pp. 180-201

This article is based on the project Innovation and Change in American Education - Kensington Revisited: A Fiteen-Year Follow-Up of an Innovative Elementary School and its Faculty. The researchers traced the original faculty of Kensington School and traced their intellectual and geographical meanderings to try to discover something about the nature of educational reform and educational innovation. Data were derived from the biographical life histories of participants based on between two and seven hours of taped interviews. The authors argue that the debate on innovation and change in American education needs to be reconstrued and recentred, especially around the belief systems, the personalities and the life histories of the critical participants.

Temme, Lloyd V.
FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: THE IMPACT OF THE ADOLESCENT SOCIAL SYSTEM ON SUBSEQUENT OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.
Bureau of Social Science Research, Washington DC, 1976; 15 pp.

The project had three objectives: (1) to examine from a multi-disciplinary perspective the theoretical and operational meanings of the concept of occupation, to develop a conceptualisation which could synthesise the major emphases extant in several disciplines and to develop reliable measures of occupational characteristics consistent with the new conceptualisation and practically usable with common occupational classification systems; (2) to provide support for the continuation of field work and data preparation for the follow-up study of men and women first interviewed by James Coleman in 1957 for his study, The Adolescent Society, to initiate new field work to conduct telephone interviews with the subjects of the Coleman study who had not previously responded to postal questionnaires, to develop machine-readable life history portfolios containing information about life experiences which had occurred since the initial data collection, and to combine the newly collected data with data collected prior to the grant for this project, thus completing all data collection procedures; and (3) to analyse the resulting matched-merged longitudinal data file and synthesise findings pertaining to long-term consequences of adolescent social systems within the tradition initiated by Coleman.

Thoen, Gail Ann
ASIAN REFUGEE STUDENTS: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING FOR AMERICA'S NEWEST IMMIGRANTS
Department of Family Life, University of Minnesota, 1982; 14 pp.

See under RACE

Trueba, Henry T
BILINGUAL BILCULTURAL EDUCATION FOR CHICANOS IN THE SOUTH WEST
1973; 13 pp.

See under RACE

Willie, Charles V
THE STAGES IN A SCHOLAR'S LIFE
Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 1981; 352 pp.

A major purpose of this study was to identify the five most outstanding black scholars in the social sciences and humanities in the United States and to determine how they achieved eminence. The study focuses on their unfolding careers, the decisive events in their lives, interconnections in their life histories, and social interaction between them and others in society. Five hundred and fifty-four members of social science and humanities professional associations ranked and nominated the black scholars. These respondents also filled out a brief questionnaire that included information on their own educational and occupational mobility and success. The five nominated scholars were asked questions about family background and economic circumstances; community race-relations climate; parent's philosophy of education; experiences in school, college, and graduate education education; and career development. Using the event-structure theoretical framework of Allport, the critical events in the life histories of the five scholars were identified and case studies prepared. Among the findings are that career, education, and family development processes are relatively independent in that each process has a life-range of its won and a sequence of stages. The last part of the document contains a survey of the educational careers of respondents which includes a demographic analysis of the study sample and an examination of career patterns by age and race. Last, the five outstanding scholars were compared to the national sample which ranked them.

Wolcott, Harry F
'Adequate Schools and Inadequate Education: The Life History of a Sneaky Kid'
ANTHROPOLOGY AND EDUCATION QUARTERLY
vol. 14, no. 1, Spring 1983; pp. 3-32

Through the life history of a 20-year-old dropout living on the fringes of society, this article points out the lack of systematic, educational efforts to support or influence young people once they are out of school.

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10. ADULT EDUCATION

Fletcher, Colin
'Community studies as practical adult education'
ADULT EDUCATION, vol. 53, no.2, July 1980; pp. 73-78

Learning from local history studies, community studies ought to make use of life history techniques in order to get data for adult education classes. Guidance is given on how to, and from whom life stories should be collected, paying particular attention to roles and opportunity structures. It recommends reading Census materials, Company House and other community studies to get supplementary data in order to examine the dynamics of the local social system.

Karelius, Karen
WOMEN'S WORKSHOP
1977, 23 pp.

See under WOMEN

Karweit, Nancy
PATTERNS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: DISCONTINUITIES AND SEQUENCES. REPORT No.222
Center for Study of Social Organizations of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1977; 28 pp.

Using a retrospective life history sample (LHS), the educational activities of white and black men from age 14 to 30 were determined. A lack of association of family background characteristics with resumption of schooling activities after labour force entry was found for both blacks and whites. Attainment level was related to the likelihood of resuming schooling: Black and white men with little educational attainment were unlikely to resume schooling. Ability differences between those continuing and not continuing were found for blacks, but not consistently for whites. Educational attainments are detailed by race, age, and type of educational activity. Rates, incidents, and duration of part-time education and other continuing education patterns are also supplied. The educational career patterns of the LHS are described in relation to labour force and educational activities.

Karweit, Nancy
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER ATTAINMENT: DETERMINANTS AND OCCUPATIONAL EFFECTS OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL
Center for Study of Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1979; 351 pp.

This study examined sources and occupational consequences of utilising alternative educational patterns in a nationally representative sample (Retrospective Life History Sample) of black and white men. The study explored patterns of educational activities used, the antecedents of the use of alternative patterns, and the occupational effects of using alternate educational routes. A significant fraction of both black men (41%) and white men (59%) did not follow the assumed pattern of continuous full-time schooling followed by labour market entrance. Instead, full-time schooling interruptions and part-time schooling resumption were prevalent for both groups. Important in explaining full-time schooling interruptions are amount of school completed and credential status attained. Part-time work experience was important in predicting the use of a continuous school pattern for whites only. Resumptions of education part-time was found to be predicted by educational attainment and credential status for blacks and whites. Ability, however, was positively related to just black's part-time educational pursuits. In considering occupational effects of pursuing alternate educational routes, occupational and educational changes during the first decade of labour force experience were included. Positive occupational effects for interrupting schooling were documented for whites, but not for blacks. Black/white differences in educational activity patterns and their sequences were seen as potential sources of racial differences in educational pay-offs.

Leonard, Raymond E.
TEN YEARS ON: A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT OPEN UNIVERSITY 'A' STUDENTS ATTACHED TO A LOCAL STUDY CENTRE
MA Dissertation, University of Hull, 1980; 120 pp.

Shortly after the Open University had taken its first entry of students ('A' Year students), its own research team headed by Naomi MacIntosh began an analysis of these first year applicants. Based on a sample of nearly 5,000, a large survey using a postal questionnaire was carried out, and the results published in *A Degree of Difference*. In his research, Leonard decided to compare the findings of MacIntosh et. al. with an in-depth study, using the life history method, of just thirteen 'A' students, who represented just under half of those who were based at one part particular Study Centre in its first year of operation, and hence drawn from the same population as the sample used by MacIntosh, but ten years on.

Pitman, Mary Anne
'Continuing Education for Women - Checkmate?'
EDUCATIONAL HORIZONS, vol. 64, no. 3, Spring 1986; pp. 123-126

This article summarises research conducted in a programme for the education of re-entry women. The conclusions are drawn from observation, document review, a survey, and life history interviews of women participating in Midwestern University's Center for Continuing Education. It discusses stages of adult life, conflict and change, transition rituals, and applying the research.

Radcliffe, David (ed)
'International Perspectives on Education and Aging'
EDUCATIONAL GERONTOLOGY, vol. 10, no. 3, 1984; pp. 185-267

See under AGEING, ELDERLY AND LIFE-SPAN DEVELOPMENT

Ruddock, Ralph
'The sociology of adult education: a plea for humanism'
STUDIES IN ADULT EDUCATION, vol. 3, no. 1, April 1971;
pp. 15-27

Outlines four approaches or perspectives to 'local studies': (a) Life histories - about forty would be enough in a small town; (b) these stories should be made intelligible in terms of roles and local opportunity structures; local social system should be highlighted through local history and the study of existing local institutions and economy; and the dynamics of the system in a community undergoing change.

Warren, Catharine E
'The Written Life History as a Prime Research Tool in Adult Education'
ADULT EDUCATION, vol. 32, no.4, Summer 1982; pp. 214-228

See under METHODOLOGY

Wolf, Mary Alice
'The Older Learner: Education as a Means to One's Past'
Paper delivered to Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Philadelphia, November 29-December 2 1983; 21 pp.

A study was conducted to try to determine older adults' motivations for and experiences in the educational system as well as to try to determine how their life histories were being woven into their educational experiences. Based on the work of such theorists such as Buhler and Erikson as well as on the life review concept of Robert Butler, the study focused on a group of older people (60-80) who were taking some form of adult education course. The researcher visited them in their homes on three occasions, each one week apart, and spent one-and-a-half hours on each visit tape-recording their thoughts. The interviews were somewhat structured. The first focused on the adults motivations for pursuing education; the second was concerned with the actual experience of classroom learning; and the last interview focused on the integration of the educational experience into the world of the learners. However, the interviewer let the subjects 'ramble on' in hopes of evoking life review types of thoughts. The study found that many motivations exist for older learners to take adult education courses, such as social class, thwarted educational dreams, or a wish to go to college. The classroom experiences of the older adults were diverse; many were nostalgic; most were positive. The interviewer found that the life review process functioned as a counterpoint to classroom involvement as a means of restoring pride and self-image when the adult education experience was not a good one. The life review also was used by the older people to remember specific scenes so as to cope with difficult times as a source of data for solving life problems. At the same time, many of the participants seemed to be on the verge of taking new directions as they reminisced about the past. Thus, the life review process was used to integrate education into their lives and to move on from the experience.
